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COMRADES IN TERROR

June 1980
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A MENACE
IS DRIVEN
FROM
THE WWF



ANDRÉ THE GIANT:
"ONE OF MY
FRIENDS WILL
BETRAY ME!"



EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Peter
King

Editor-in-Chief

Once again, it is time to put the sport of wrestling in perspective.

This is the column I call "Random Thoughts."

1. Perhaps we all bear responsibility for the Larry Zbyszko tragedy. Now that he's in the spotlight, we all see just how talented a wrestler he is. Yet we all tended to ignore him before.
2. If anyone asked me who the greatest natural athlete in the sport is I'd say it was a toss-up between Ernie Ladd and Ken Patera.
3. Wrestling is a sport which attracts the most brutal people in the world. But The Samoans have gone too far. They should be banned.
4. Kevin Von Erich is the last best hope to save wrestling from drowning in the filth of rulebreakers' control.
5. I've watched Hulk Hogan wrestle at least 30 times now, and I still can't believe a human being can be so awesome.
6. When Ric Flair and Greg Valentine go to war, do not buy a ring-side seat unless you're wearing a raincoat. The blood is gonna flow!
7. In an exclusive interview with Italian journalist Angelina Giannini, Dusty Rhodes said if he doesn't win the NWA title before the end of 1980 he will retire.
8. Did you know that Nick Bockwinkel is the only world champion who does not have to make mandatory title defenses? With a smart manager behind him, Bockwinkel could avoid top contenders forever.
9. Maybe it's just me, but I find it hard to cheer for Pat Patterson. I remember too many limp bodies carried off on stretchers to be comfortable considering him a fan favorite.
10. Recently, I attended a match in which Andre the Giant battled Harley Race for the NWA belt. Five seconds after the bell sounded, Race was desperate for a disqualification. This man is a champion?

TOP SECRET



Behind the Dressing Room Door

**by Stu
Saks**

SOMETHING SNAPPED IN-SIDE Bugsy McGraw's head. Several of his "friends" were pummeling Dusty Rhodes into a bloody pulp, yet he could not join the fun. McGraw stood dazed on the ring apron, glaring into the crowd but seeing no one. Images flashed through his mind.

Kate Smith was singing "God Bless America." The U.S. Olympic hockey team in wild celebration after defeating the Soviets at Lake Placid. A Chevrolet filled with apple pies.

McGraw shook his head violently, bringing himself back to the reality of the situation. In the ring, "The American Dream," was being stripped of both his pride and his skin. And something snapped.

Enraged, Bugsy rushed into the ring. Clasping his hands together, he slugged Nikolai Volkoff across the back of the head. The Russian fell to the mat, turned his head back to see what hit him, caught a glimpse of McGraw's crazed expression, and led the rulebreakers' quick departure from the ring.

Bugsy helped Rhodes to the dressing room where I received an exclusive interview. "All I can say," McGraw said in his usual philosophic tone, "is that I was brought up to be a good American. I was taught to respect and carry out the principles of our Constitution. I was very touched by our Olympic effort and I fully support what this country is doing around the world. I love my country and everything it stands for."

"Dusty Rhodes, I believe, stands for everything good this

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Body Slams & Pinfalls

By Dan Shocket

WHOO WOULD HAVE guessed that somewhere in Larry Zbyszko there lurked a man?

Today, the young grappler stands alone. He has turned his back on Bruno Sammartino, the man who felt Larry's best interests were to be under Bruno's thumb. It took an incredible match to turn these two into enemies, but the savagery was worth it. Zbyszko has shown the world what Bruno Sammartino is really like.

It takes a special kind of louse to call a man "friend" and then keep that friend back. Sammartino has done this to Zbyszko for years. The young man is much better than Sammartino ever let him be. Bruno may look stupid, but he's shrewd when it comes to protecting his career. Sammartino took one look at Larry and knew the young grappler could beat him easily. So Bruno did something about it.

Everyone knows the story, though few people know the truth. Bruno proclaimed he was helping Larry become a star. He would bring along the

young athlete slowly. He would treat Larry like a son. Actually, he would treat Larry like a child. Bruno's idea of friendship: if you can't keep them away, keep them down. And he kept Larry down.

How many times did Bruno run into the match when Zbyszko was in



Larry Zbyszko puts his hands around Bruno Sammartino's throat.

trouble? Supposedly he did it to help his young friend. How brave. How kind. How clever to keep Zbyszko thinking he needs Bruno to save him.

Though most wrestlers won't say it for publication, they believe Zbyszko could've saved himself. And if not, a beating isn't the worst thing that could happen to a young wrestler. It's part of the learning

process. Sammartino purposely crippled Zbyszko's confidence by running in when no help was necessary.

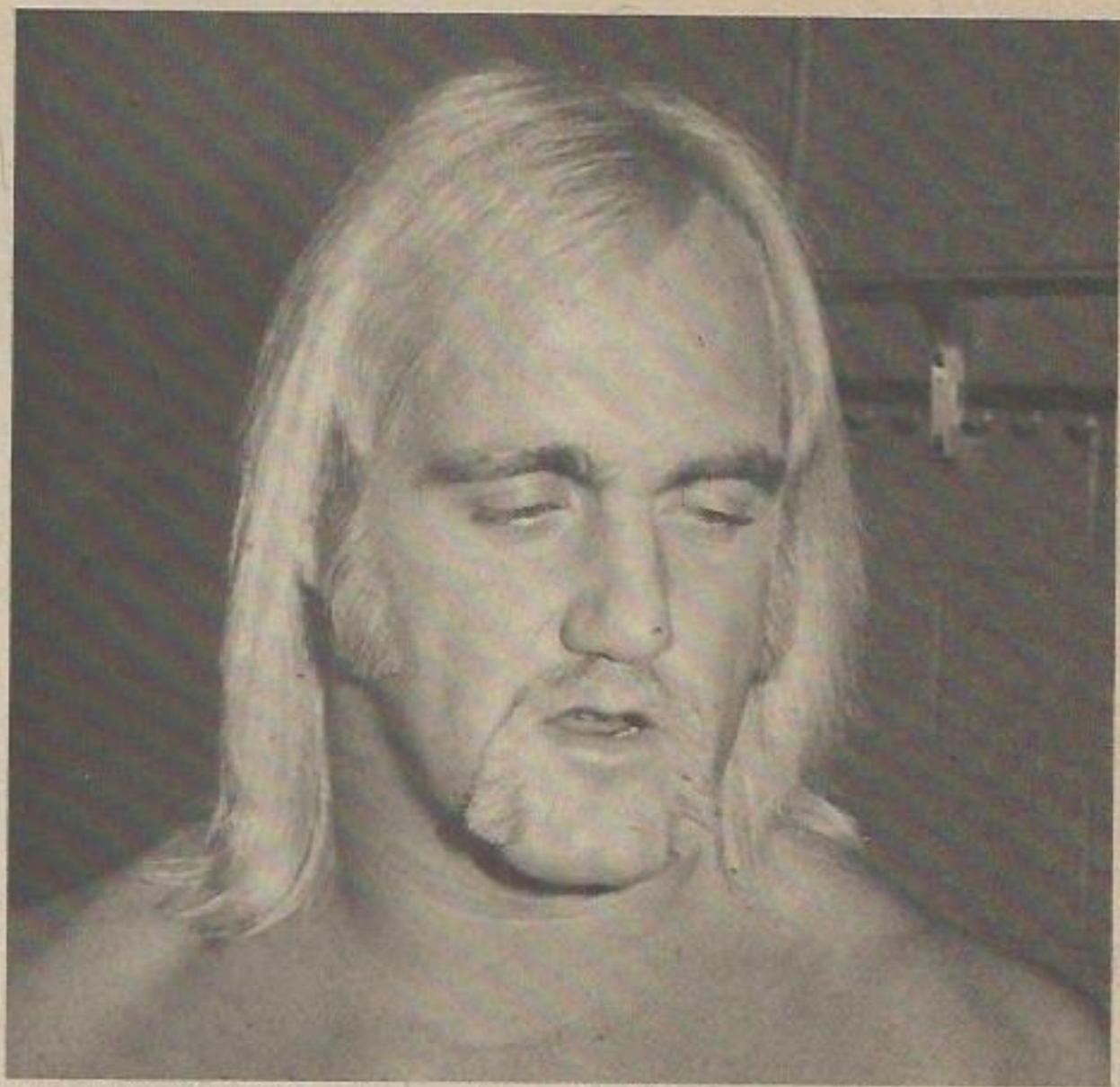
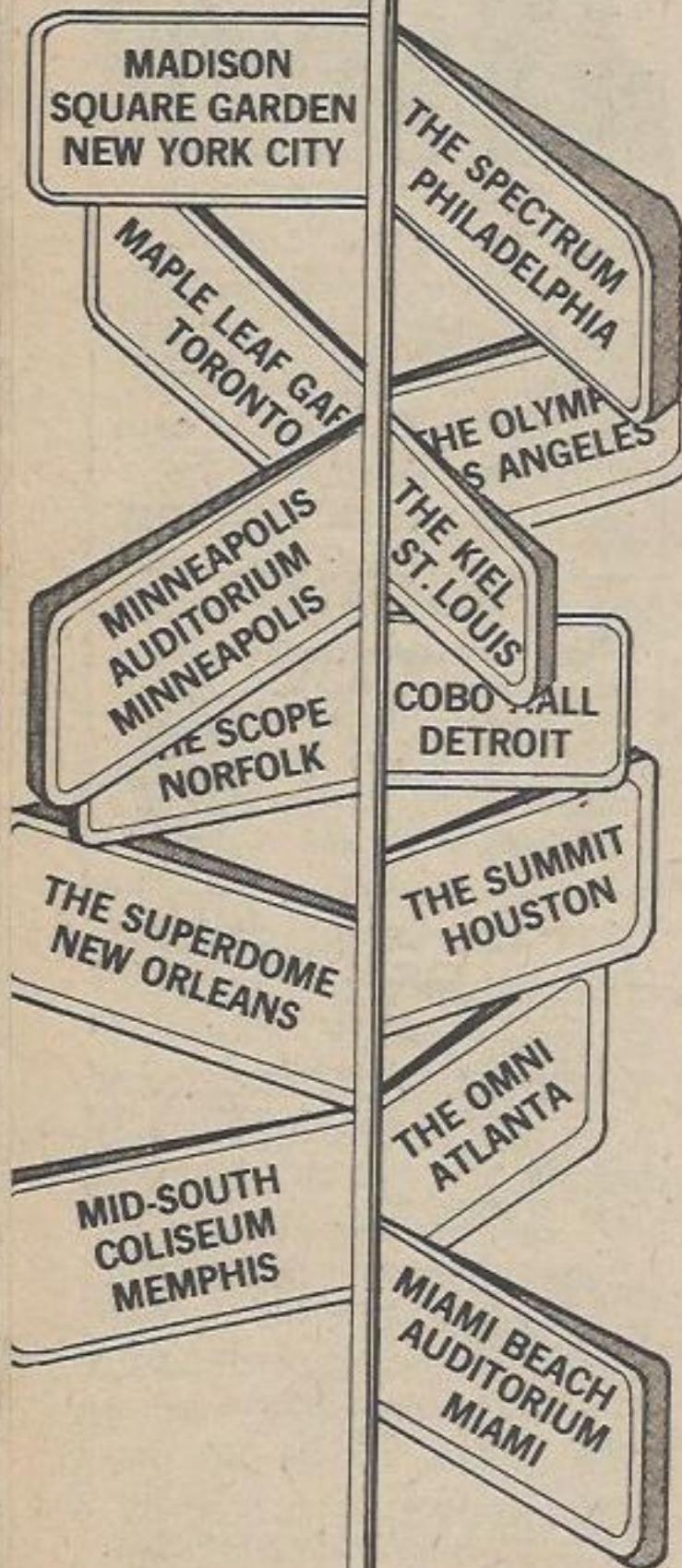
It's no secret that Zbyszko has until now not reached his potential. Smothered by Sammartino's "concern," Zbyszko never had the room to learn and grow. He tried every way he knew to get Sammartino away from him. The only thing that succeeded was to battle Sammartino in the ring.

Even then, Sammartino did everything possible to strip Zbyszko of his dignity. Bruno stressed that he wouldn't try to hurt Zbyszko. In other words, Larry isn't good enough for Sammartino to seriously consider as an opponent. Yeah, Bruno gave him a match. All he asked in return was that Zbyszko be treated like a second-class citizen. Larry was second class and Bruno had no class at all.

The match was fairly predictable. You could see in Larry's eyes that the pressure was intense. It was

(Continued on page 62)

ON THE ROAD
with
GARY MORGESTEIN



INSIDE WRESTLING'S Gary Morgenstern and Matt Brock went on the road to interview Hulk Hogan (above) and his manager, Fred Blassie. After arriving late, Matt used a credit card to pick the lock of their hotel door and received a not-so-warm greeting when met inside by Hogan and Blassie. Needless to say, Brock got the story he was looking for.

ME AND MATT BROCK on assignment together. Going on the road with the man who taught me all I know about wrestling journalism. I thought we'd scoop the world. Instead, we begin the assignment in a ratty diner waiting for Brock to focus his bleary, bloodshot eyes.

"Thank God for coffee," Matt said, wincing as he sipped the fifth cup. I waited, picking at my cold toast. We'd been there over an hour.

"Appointment's for two o'clock, Matt."

"Yeah?"

"Shouldn't we be near that time?" I looked at my watch. One fifty-five. Our meeting was at least 20 minutes away. I was irritated. Besides, I wasn't used to breakfast at one in the afternoon. Obviously, Brock was accustomed to such bizarre hours. I don't think he's seen 8 am since his Navy days.

We were scheduled to interview

Fred Blassie and Hulk Hogan. I was compulsively punctual, almost neurotically so. Matt was, well, Matt was Matt.

"Son, don't worry."

"I like to be on time."

"Why?"

"Well, I don't know, makes me . . ."

"Keep worrying and you'll have no stomach left. Listen, son, let 'em wait, let 'em wonder, keep 'em off guard. I've been around a while."

Much as I loved and admired Matt, I didn't want to hear stories. Not now. Not with the sun still out.

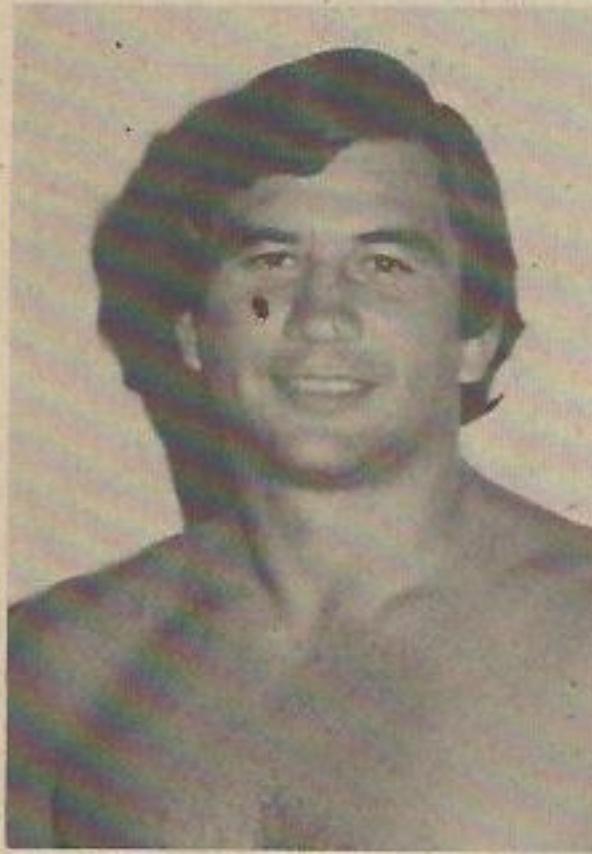
Another 20 minutes, a cup of coffee, cheese danish and a loud belch. Grabbed a cab crosstown, strutted through a luxuriant lobby, up to the fourth floor. Four-oh-six. Matt gestured for quiet. He leaned against the door, listened, grunted and took out a credit card.

"Shouldn't we knock?" I

(Continued on page 50)

NAMES MAKI

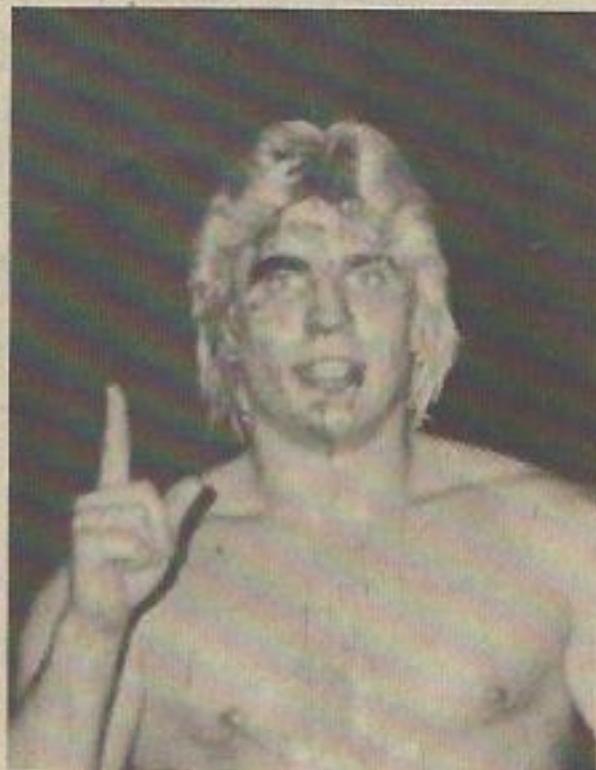
JERRY BRISCO says he wants to wrestle Mike Graham for the International Junior Heavy-weight championship—even if it means losing some fans in the process. "There are a lot of fans who are hot at me for challenging Mike," Jerry explained in an exclusive INSIDE WRESTLING interview. "I love my fans very much and do not want to lose one of them, but if they don't understand and leave my side, I'm sorry.



JERRY BRISCO

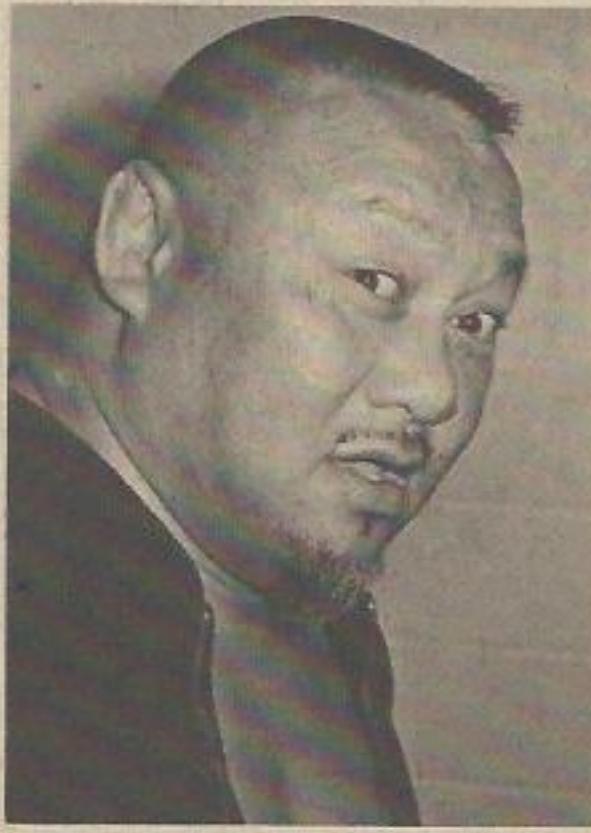
I want that title."

TOMMY RICH seems to be recovering well from the leg injury he sustained when he was sneak attacked by NWA champion HARLEY RACE moments after Tommy won the Georgia Television title from AUSTIN IDOL. Race knocked Tommy senseless and then had Idol put the figure four leglock on Tommy, seriously damaging his leg. Race allegedly paid Austin \$5,000 to put Tommy out of commission. He succeeded—but it will only be for a



TOMMY RICH

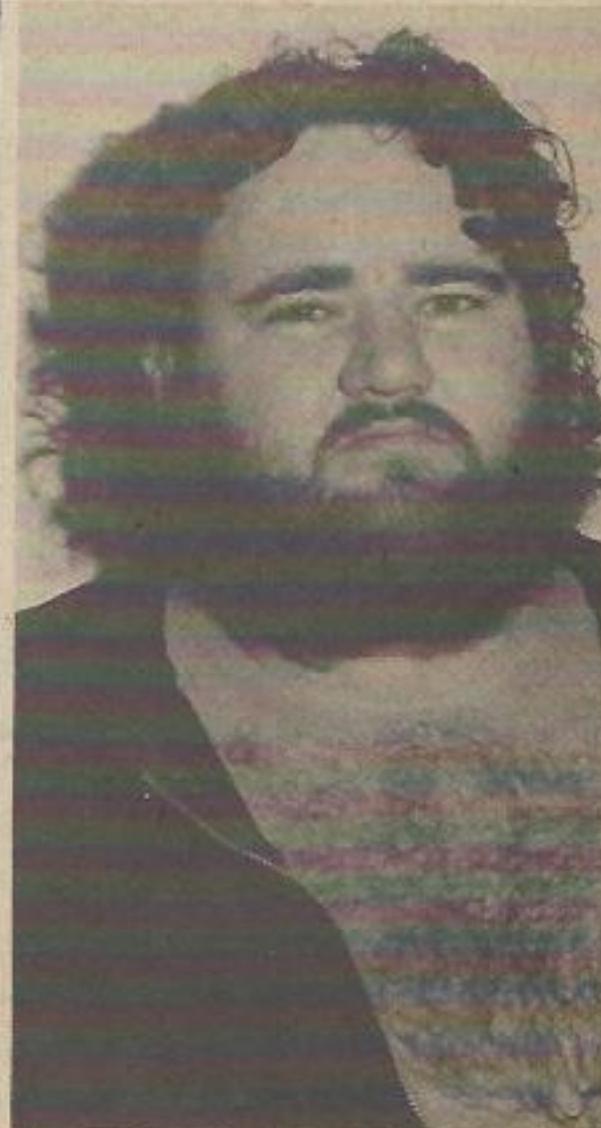
short time. I'd hate to be in Race and Idol's shoes once Tommy gets his mitts on them! By the way, Race has now put another bounty on the head of a Georgia wrestler—MR. WRESTLING II. The price is 10 grand for any wrestler who can cripple the great masked man and get him off Harley's path. Wrestling II is the current NWA number one challenger.



PROFESSOR TANAKA

BRUNO SAMMARTINO went berserk in his Philadelphia match against Larry Zbyszko and was disqualified. "I'll destroy that monster I created," the two time WWF champion vows . . . In Nashville, Tennessee GYPSY JOE and BOBBY EATON were both disqualified after they battled so furiously even the police could not stop them! . . . RAY STEVENS and GREG VALENTINE swear they will be wearing the NWA tag team belts by the time you are reading this.

SWEET BROWN SUGAR has surfaced in Texas and he is looking for a match against PROFESSOR TANAKA . . . In the AWA, JERRY BLACKWELL demands that he be billed as "Crusher" Blackwell. The promoters refuse to do this until he meets and defeats



JERRY BLACKWELL

I N' NEWS

Bill Apter
reporting...



PAUL JONES

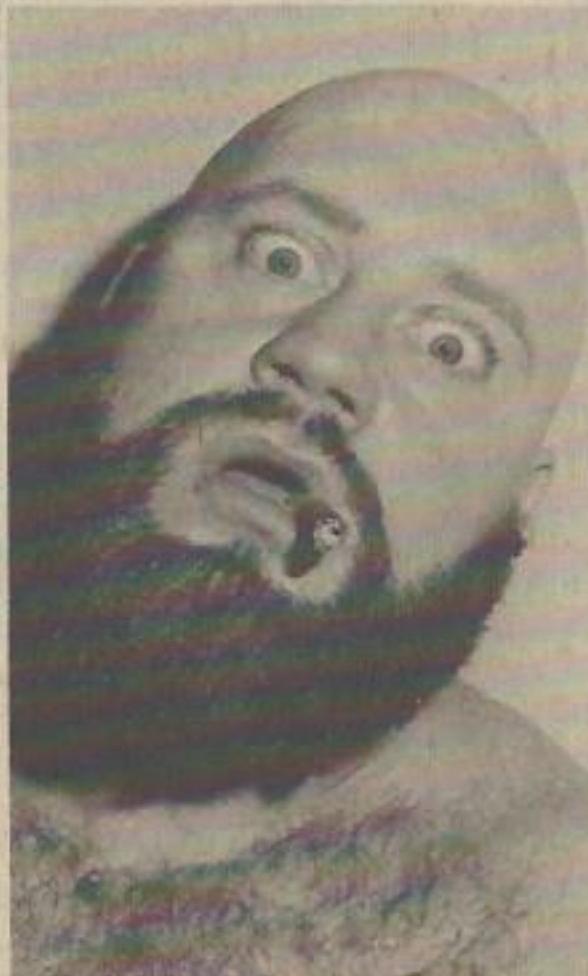
THE CRUSHER, the man who has owned that name in the AWA for many years. Says Crusher, "If that tub 'a lard can defeat me, he can have my Crusher moniker!"

Who is the mysterious masked MR. FLORIDA who is currently grappling in the "Sunshine State?"

... PAUL JONES claims he was the man who ran BARON VON RASCHKE from the Mid-Atlantic region . . . LARS ANDERSON is teaming with brother OLE as they try to win the Georgia tag team belts from IVAN KOLOFF and ALEXIS SMIRNOFF . . . WWF champion BOB BACKLUND calls DICK MURDOCH one of the best challengers he has had outside the WWF territory. Bob wrestled Murdoch on a recent card in St. Louis, Missouri . . . With the illegal

assistance of his manager GENE ANDERSON, JIMMY SNUKA continues to rule the United States championship.

TONY GAREA is still trying to get a solid win over DEWEY ROBERTSON . . . NIKOLAI VOLKOFF has signed a contract to have SIR OLIVER HUMPERDINK manage his career, while BUGSY McGRAW has split from the Humperdink camp and has become a fan favorite in Florida! Bugsy has been teaming with DUSTY RHODES and MANNY FERNANDEZ, and the fans love it!



BUGSY McGRAW

In a beautiful scientific match that ended in a draw, PAUL ORNDORFF took on TED DiBIASE in Shreveport, Louisiana. Both agreed they would like nothing better than to grapple in scientific bouts more often . . . BULLDOG DON KENT says that CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW



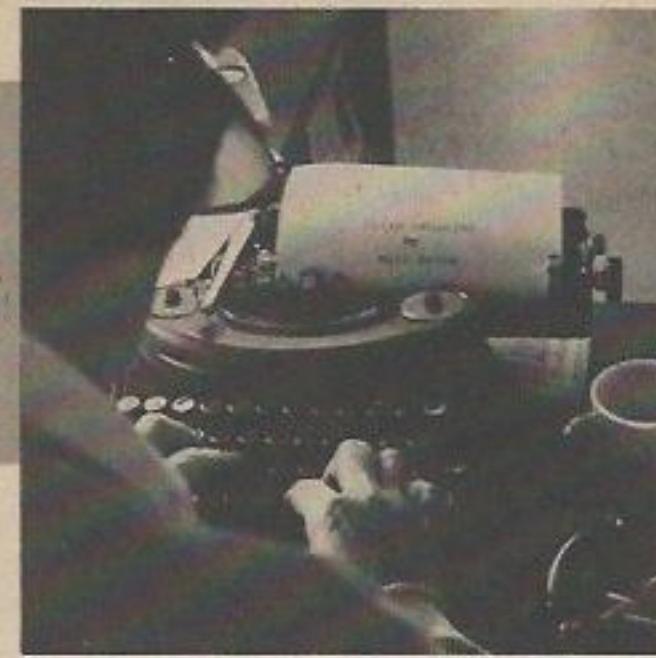
THE KIWIS

is very overrated. "He is mere putty in my hands," Kent said.

THE KIWIS have invaded the Pacific Northwest and plan to squash every top team in the area . . . THE GREAT MEPHISTO now manages both ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER and a new tag team by the name of THE MANCHURIANS.

EDOUARD CARPENTIER is wrestling in Montreal and he looks just great. Carpenter has never let himself get out of condition and he feels he is still good enough to wrestle for—and win—one of the major world titles! . . . GINO HERNANDEZ says he is a natural blond (even though he had dark brown hair since his pro debut). "I dyed it brown," he insists. "I'm a real blond." He also insists on being called "Gorgeous Gino." Open the windows gang!

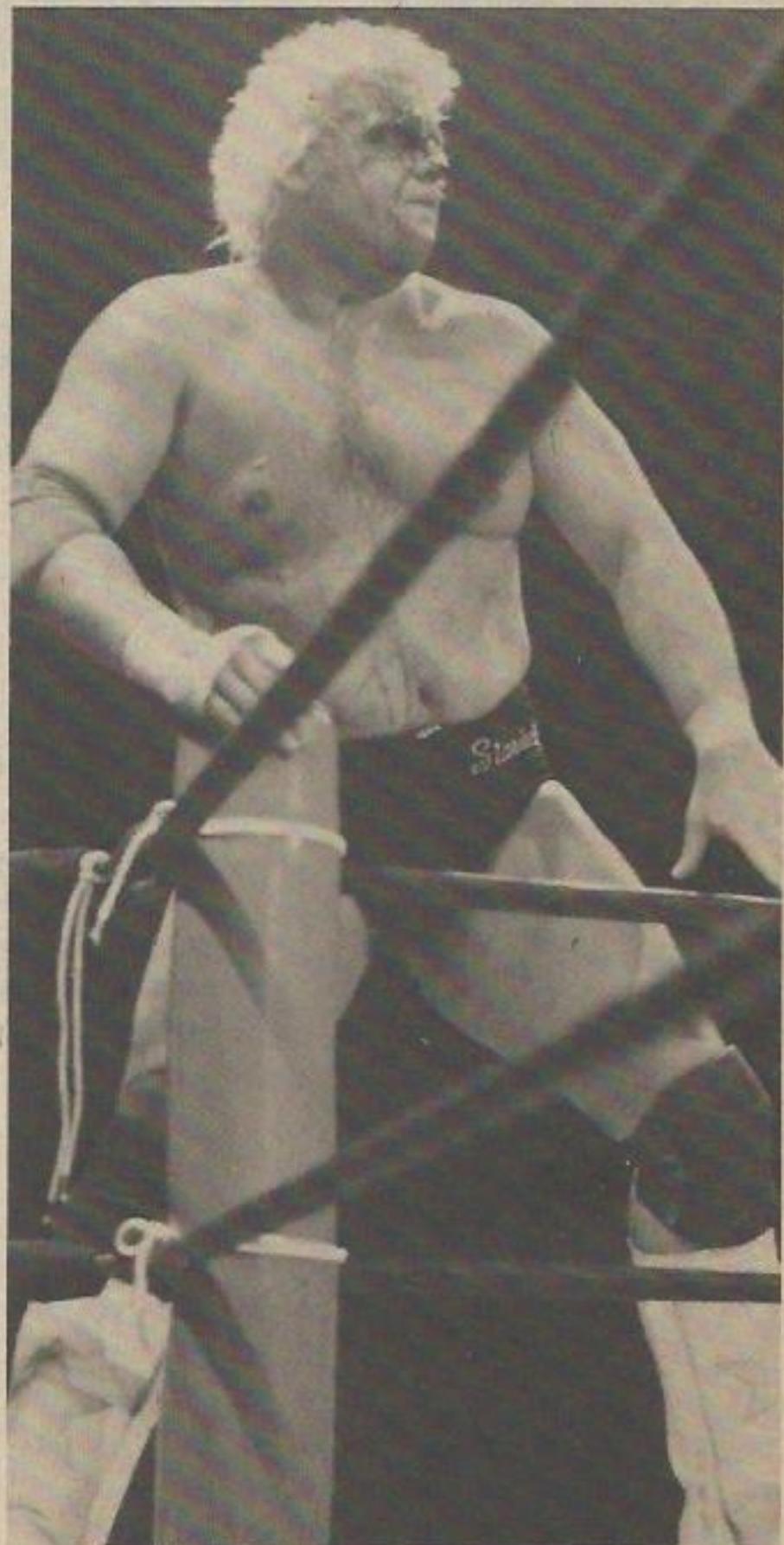
That's all for now. See you next time. □



Matt Brock's PLAIN SPEAKING

TAMPA, FLA.: Me and Dusty, smoke, spilled beer, peanuts, country music oozing some unimaginable pain out of a squat jukebox at the rear of the bar. Me and Dusty Rhodes. Neither had spoken for half an hour. I respect a man's silence as an extension of privacy. I've known Dusty for a long time, shared the ups and downs, pains and joy. Tonight was ecstasy. Yet Rhodes didn't jump for joy. Instead, he sat pensively, handsome face convolving in thought. I understood. Rhodes had gone through hell. He's suffered inner doubts. Rhodes wondered if he were slipping, if he'd ever win a title again. He was wrong. So were a lot of people. I confess to being part of that skeptical mob. I told Dusty that. He grinned, shook his head, and ordered another round. I waited. I would've waited until closing time for Rhodes to get the anguish off his chest. Another plate of pretzels, another sad song, another round, more cigar smoke. Rhodes would say few words. Much of his thoughts were emotionally inarticulate. Couldn't communicate them. I understood. A nervous cough, sip, crackle and out popped Rhodes. The Dream said beating Leroy Brown vindicated his entire career. While the Southern heavyweight championship wasn't the NWA belt, it acted as a springboard, renewed his self-confidence and energy. Champion Dusty Rhodes rose, grinned, and dropped a 20 on the table. This night, everything was on him.

CHARLOTTE, N.C.: Greg Valentine. Turn the name over in your mouth and feel the bile building. Imagine you're Ric Flair. You see a guy who was once your friend. This dude threatens to put your ear on your navel, your foot in your mouth, and other assorted physical floral arrangements. You want to smash him into the ground. Yet you feel a twinge of remorse, of



DUSTY RHODES

Harder than nails, veteran wrestling reporter Matt Brock has logged more miles covering wrestling than any other journalist. Every month Matt will travel to the sport's hotbeds, reporting everything he sees without fear or favor



ANDRE THE GIANT

regret, wonder why you should be the victim, wonder if you can ever impart any sense into that sneering face. You know you must destroy him, for the very good of wrestling, indeed, for your own survival. You have no alternative. But the seeds of friendship never really die. Always, they lie dormant, waiting for fertilization. You regret the seeds must be buried beneath one of your muscular bodies. You don't want it to be yours.

NEW YORK, N.Y.: Lou Albano swore on everything he holds dear (his wallet and bankbook), that Andre the Giant will sign a contract and form a formidable three man tag team with The Samoans. Why Andre would contemplate such a move had to be answered. Albano said Andre wanted to be champion, respected both him and The Samoans, as people and wrestlers, and asked him, Albano, to join forces. I decided to confront Andre with the shocking story. Except I couldn't find the Giant. I

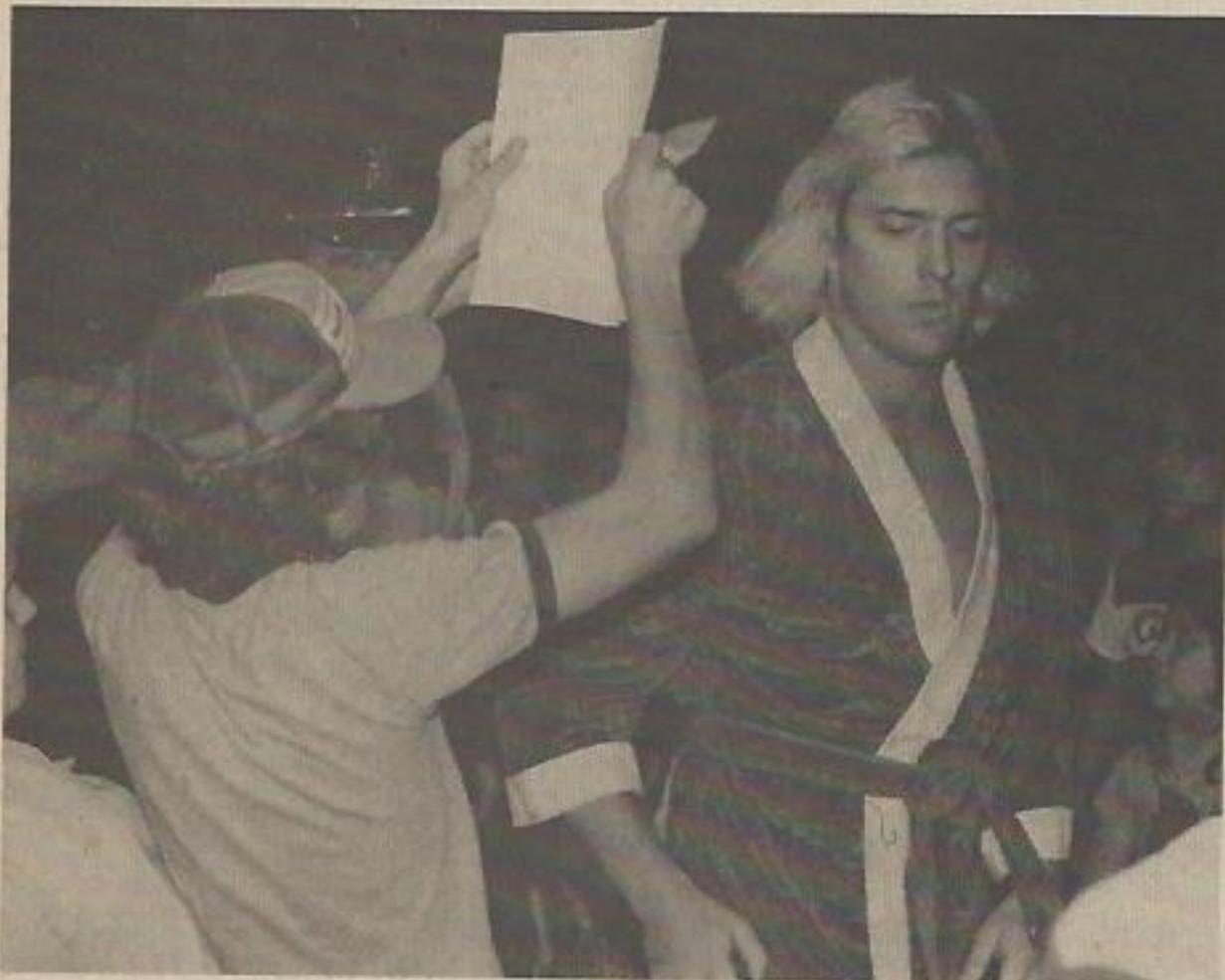


BOB BACKLUND

patrolled all his favorite joints. Pepe Gomez's Mexican Hat. Hessian Harry's Nautical Nosh. Sam's Snack 'N Bun. No Andre. No one had seen him for days. I grew concerned. Andre the Giant doesn't lose himself in a crowd. While shaking down the story and increasing my expense account, I bumped into one of Andre's friends. He offered to buy me a drink. Low-cal soda, natch. Elliot told me Andre had been very despondent lately and he wouldn't dismiss that story. I left puzzled. And worried. Andre and The Samoans under the guidance of Captain Lou Albano could rule wrestling.

ST. LOUIS, MO.: What's Bob Backlund up to? Supposedly traveling to St. Louis for R and R, Backlund books himself against every wrestler he can find. I lunched with old pal Sam Muchnik, a promoter for over 35 years. Sam suspects Backlund has too much to prove and simply can't avoid a match. Sounds good to me. □

Gino Hernandez's Claim: "THE VON ERICH NAME HAS BEEN DISGRACED!"



Fritz Von Erich, a rulebreaker in his early years, gives stern instruction to son Kevin as David listens (above). Gino Hernandez (below) calls Kevin, David, and Kerry a disgrace to the family name.

WHAT IS THE Von Erich legacy? Two vehement interpretations flail the Texas air and set the foundation for a fierce, perhaps tragic war.

"To be a Von Erich is to seek the highest pinnacle of hard work, dedication, and loyalty," said Kevin Von Erich.

"Winning like a man, fairly, without cheating, that's what being a Von Erich is all about," said David Von Erich.

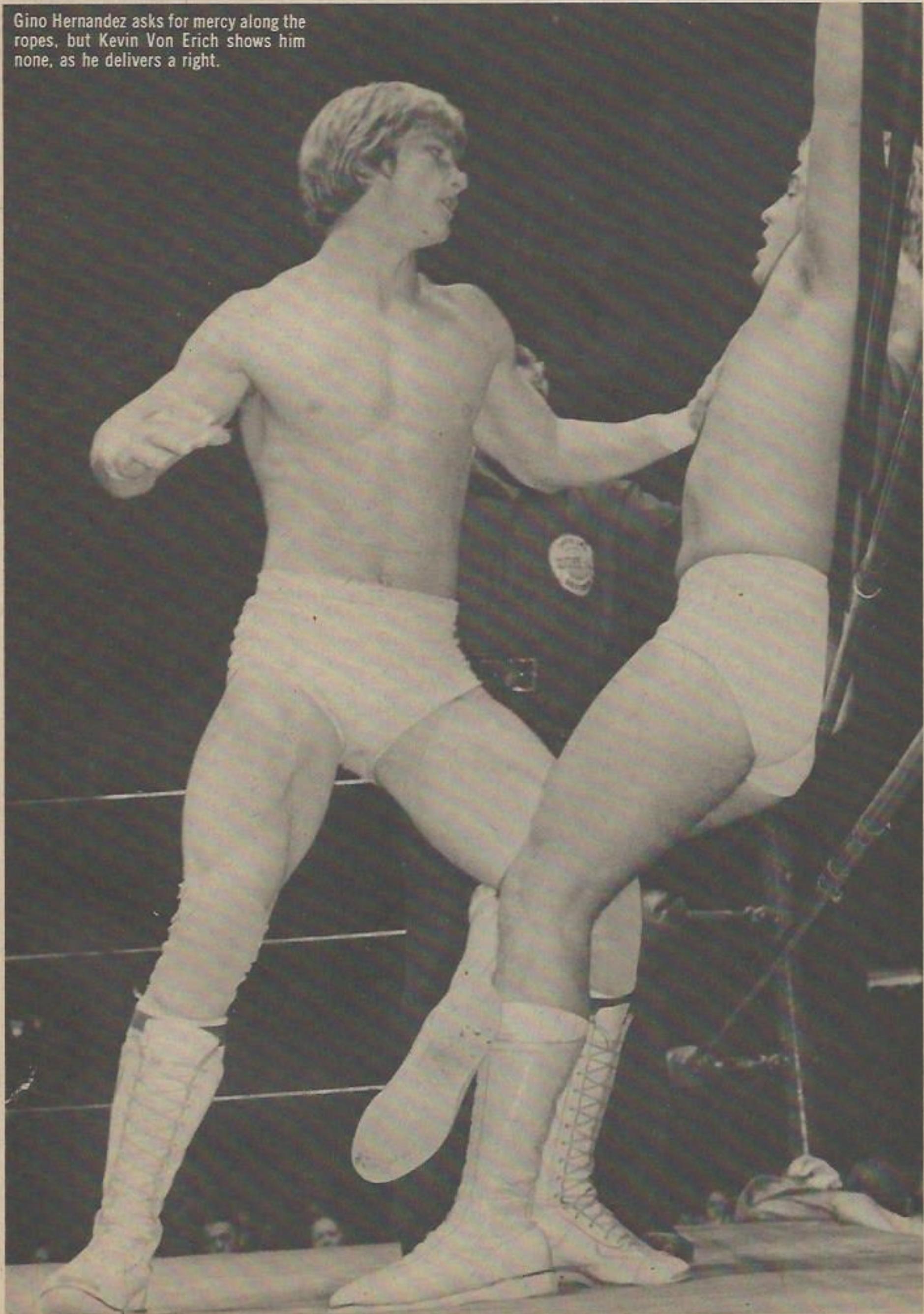
"The Von Erich name has been disgraced," shouts Gino Hernandez. "Those two-bit punks don't know the first thing about wrestling."

Gino Hernandez doesn't like Kevin and David and Kerry Von Erich. Especially Kevin. Though

Embittered jealousy fills Gino Hernandez with mindless hatred. Merely looking at one of the Von Erichs drives him mad with contempt. Now Hernandez issues his most shocking claim. Hernandez says the Von Erich boys disgrace their family legacy

PHOTOS BY JIM CALDWELL

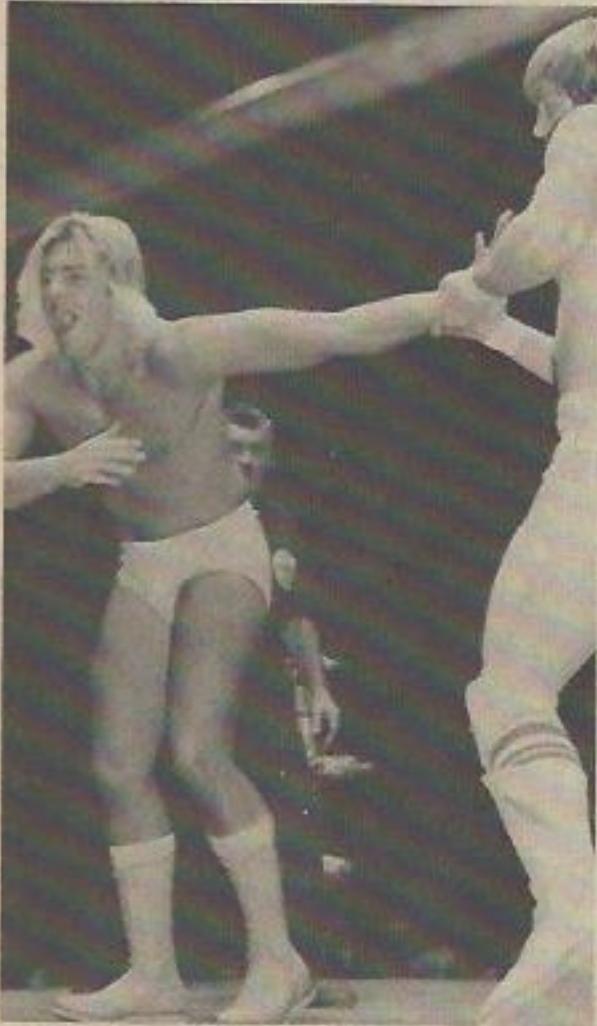
Gino Hernandez asks for mercy along the ropes, but Kevin Von Erich shows him none, as he delivers a right.



Hernandez will deny it, he is jealous of the Von Erichs.

"They never worked for nothin' in their whole lives," snapped Gino. "Once, bein' a Von Erich meant winnin' and wrestlin' like a man, not some hunky-dunkie pansy. Kevin Von Erich don't know the first thing about wrestlin'. It shows in his game and it'll show when I wipe the floor with his pretty face."

Hernandez had to work and



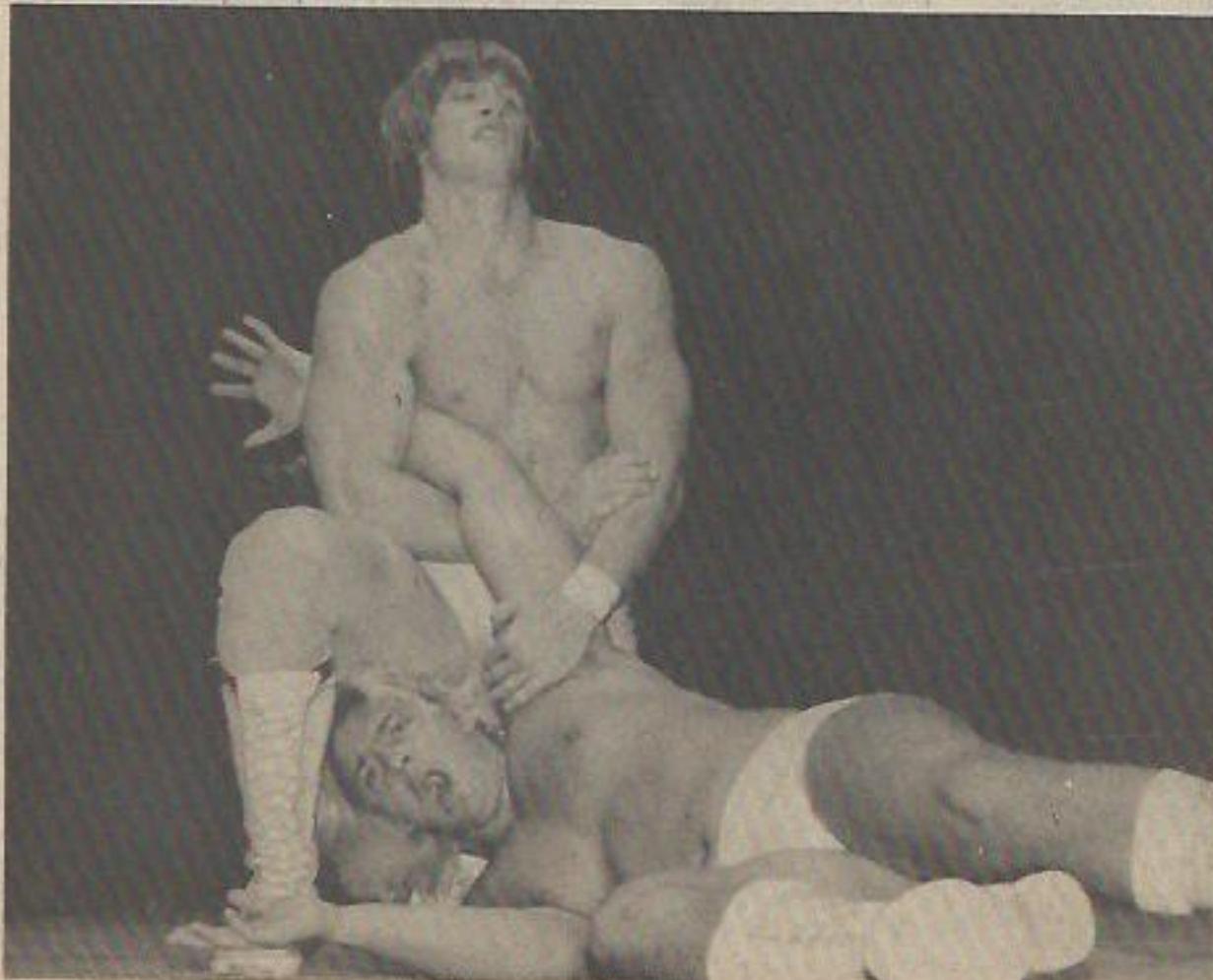
scrap his way to the top. No one ever gave him anything. Hernandez recalls a night he waited at the back entrance of an arena for his hero to emerge.

"It was freezin', man, I had a thin jacket 'cause I couldn't afford a warm one," recounted Hernandez. "And my hero comes out. His name is Fritz Von Erich. He got his kids with him, Kevin and David. I'm shiverin' and my hands are turnin' blue. I hold out this autograph book and ask him to sign his name.

"And that little punk, either Kevin or David, I can't tell 'em apart, says, no, no Daddy, don't give him an autograph. Fritz looked real mean at the punk and said if the boy wants to wait, he's shown himself to be a man and deserves a Von Erich autograph.

"I never forgot that. Now the punks spoil that. They don't sign autographs, they never do, they're too busy. Who the hell do they think they are? Who do they think pays their lousy stinkin' salary? They sure as hell don't earn their lousy money," Hernandez

Hernandez lets out a scream as Kevin twists his wrist (left) and applies an armbar (below).



continued.

"I know what it's like to struggle and fight for everything in life. That's the true meanin' of a Von Eric, makin' it on your own and appreciatin' the little guys, the ones who helped you back then. Not ignoring some poor little kid freezin' his butt off to get some crummy John Hancock," said Hernandez, his voice weighted with bitterness.

"Wheneva I get a chance to wrestle a Von Erich, I get so pumped up I think I'm gonna go into orbit. No one psyches me up like one of those punks. Seein' their blood on the canvas is one of the real pleasures in life. And beatin' them into the ground can make my whole day," Hernandez said.

And how do the Von Erichs feel about these startling attacks on their family heritage?

"You have to take it from the source," said Kevin, smiling wryly. "Gino is a very bitter guy. He's had some bruises in his life. I feel sorry for him, but it isn't my fault he had to struggle."

"And he acts like we were born with a silver spoon. Not at all. If he knew anything, which he doesn't, Gino would know that a Von Erich works for everything. My dad made us sink or swim on our own merit. He didn't do anything special for us."

"Like any experienced wrestler, he showed us moves and some ring style. But it was up to us. If we fell on our faces, we fell on our faces. My dad wouldn't sit at ringside."

"No, Hernandez is way out of line, as he usually is on most items. He wants to blame someone for his own failures and thinks my family is a handy target. What Hernandez doesn't realize is he'd better back up his big-mouth with some big maneuvers."

"As I've showed him on many occasions, he is nothing but a second-rate wrestler with a big mouth. When he learns his place, he'll be a happier man," Kevin said. □

THE INSIDER

By STEVEN FARHODD

SCOOP OF THE MONTH

Mr. Wrestling II may accept a high position in the federal government in Washington, D.C. if President Carter is re-elected in November!

II and Carter have been close friends since the President was the Governor of the state of Georgia. Carter has kept in touch with the popular grappler during his White House years.

Have two of the most famous men in the world discussed working together in 1981? II is

understandably vague in revealing details.

"I think everyone knows how close the President and I are," the masked scientific star said. "We go back a long way. I was with Jimmy in 1976, and I'll be with him when he wins again in November."

But you didn't answer the question, II. Will you leave wrestling to join the President's staff?

"Hey, you know that for me to leave wrestling, a mighty important alternative will have to come along. Of course,

working in the Carter administration would warrant consideration as such an alternative. Whether I took such a job or not, however, I would be extremely flattered and honored to even receive consideration."

Sounds like II knows more than he's saying. Only time will tell if he will leave his millions of mat fans for Washington, D.C. II would make a fine politician. He is friendly, level-headed, intelligent, and well-spoken. His value as an ambassador to a foreign country would be unquestioned. He would also be ideal as the head of some social program, working with the people of America for their welfare—the same people who love him so dearly.

One last question, II. Does the President know what you look like without your mask?

"Some things I have to keep to myself," he answered.

Spoken like a true politician.

RUMOR VS. FACT

RUMOR: Hulk Hogan was once a 98-pound weakling who turned to body-building after a beach bully kicked sand in his face several years ago!

FACT: Hulk Hogan was underdeveloped as a teenager, but the details of the rumor are slightly inaccurate. Hogan offers his version:

"First of all, it wasn't a beach, it was a pool. I was lying around, minding my own business,

(Continued on page 58)



President Carter and his old friend, Mr. Wrestling II.

HOTSEAT

ANDRE THE GIANT: "ONE OF MY FRIENDS WILL BETRAY ME!"

FEW HAVE HAD the widespread, profound influence on a sport like this kind, gentle man. He has shown gentility and character strength in a profession where precious few show either. Despite never winning a title, he is loved and respected by fans and peers alike. However, recent trends disturb him. Too many men have turned against their friends. Too many forsake the principles of honesty, integrity, and fairness. Too few echo the marvelously enchanting traits of this wonderful man. He is Andre the Giant.

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED
BY BILL APTER

- Q: Andre, thanks for taking time for this interview.
A: My pleasure, Bill.
Q: What's your opinion of wrestling?
A: Very disturbing.
Q: How so?

A: Too many people don't care for their friendships. Too much greed and too little love.

Q: Anyone in particular?

A: Well, I think the Larry

“
When I first came up... a friend was a friend, simple as that. Wrestlers helped each other, trusted each other. You knew who was enemy and who was friend.
”

Zbyszko incident has worried many people.

Q: Why?

A: Who would have thought Larry would do that to his friend Bruno? If Zbyszko will give in to greed and betray Sammartino, what is to

prevent similar attacks? If all wrestlers care about is greed, the very foundation of wrestling is threatened.

Q: Are you worried about betrayal?

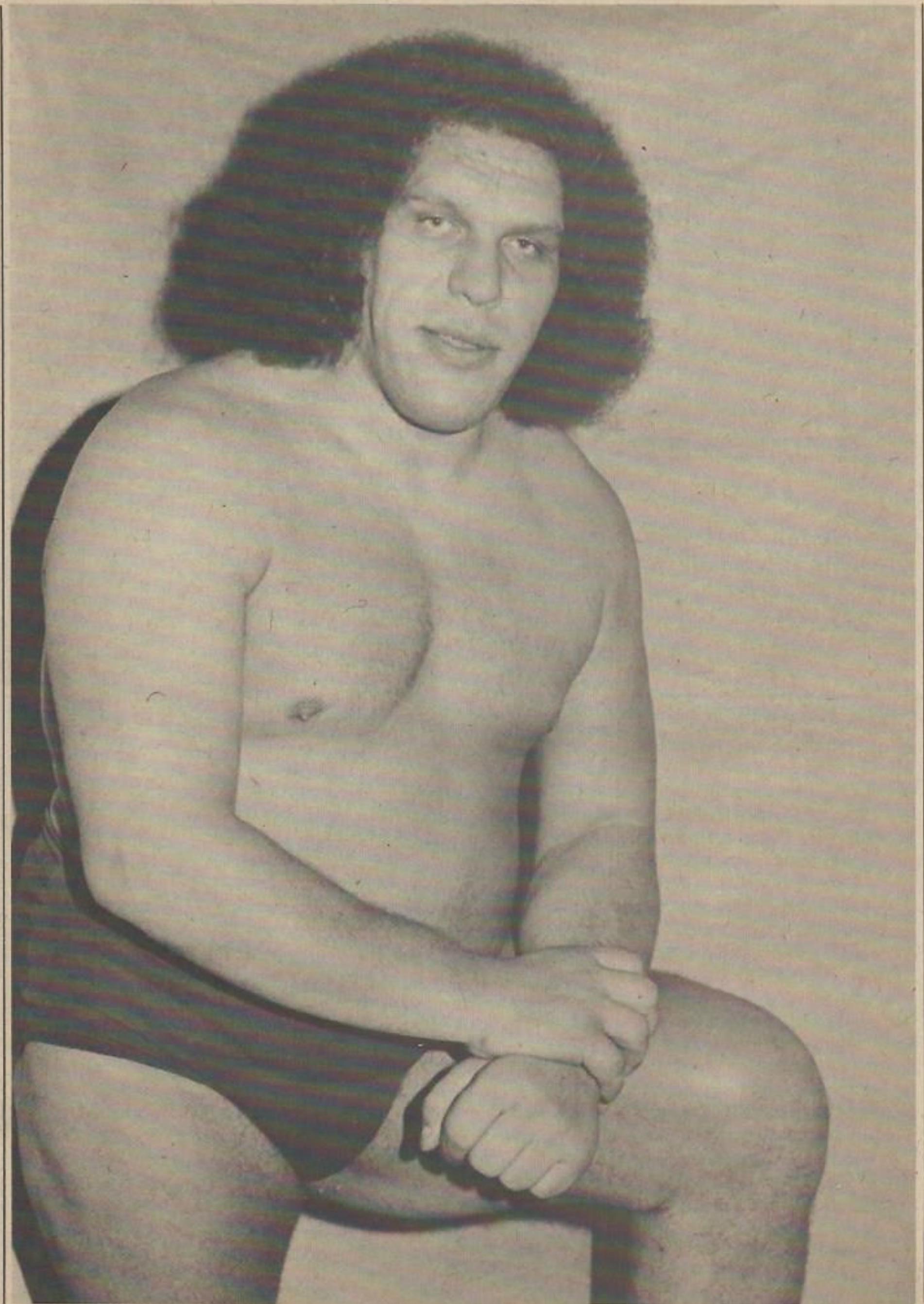
A: When I first came up, such thoughts were foreign to me. A friend was a friend, simple as that. Wrestlers helped each other, trusted each other. You knew who was enemy and who was friend. Now, you can't tell.

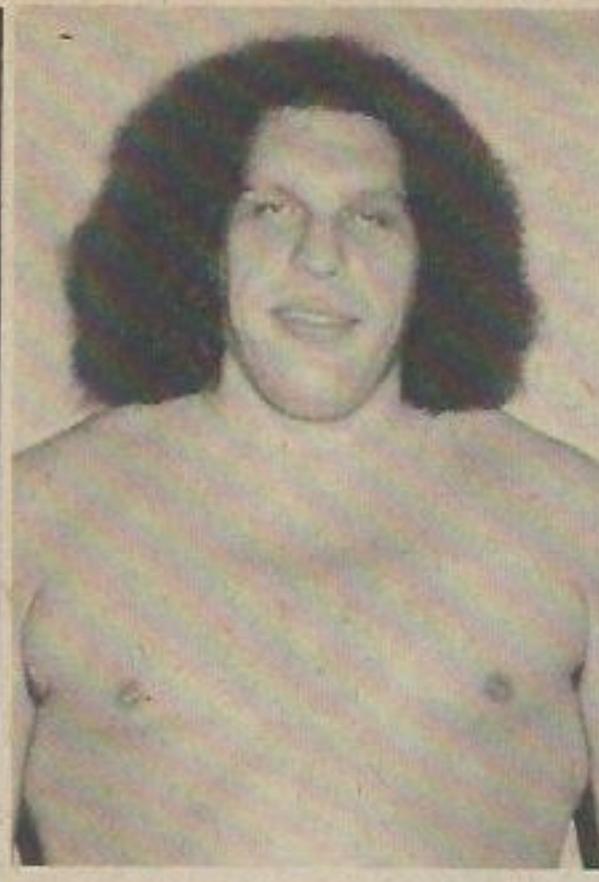
Q: You do sound concerned.

A: One of my friends will betray me. What can I do about that? Someone will offer a friend money, or he'll be jealous of me or a misunderstanding will develop. Instead of sitting down and talking, he'll attack, stab me in the back.

Q: You sound sad.

A: It is a sad state of affairs. Wrestling is such a beautiful sport.



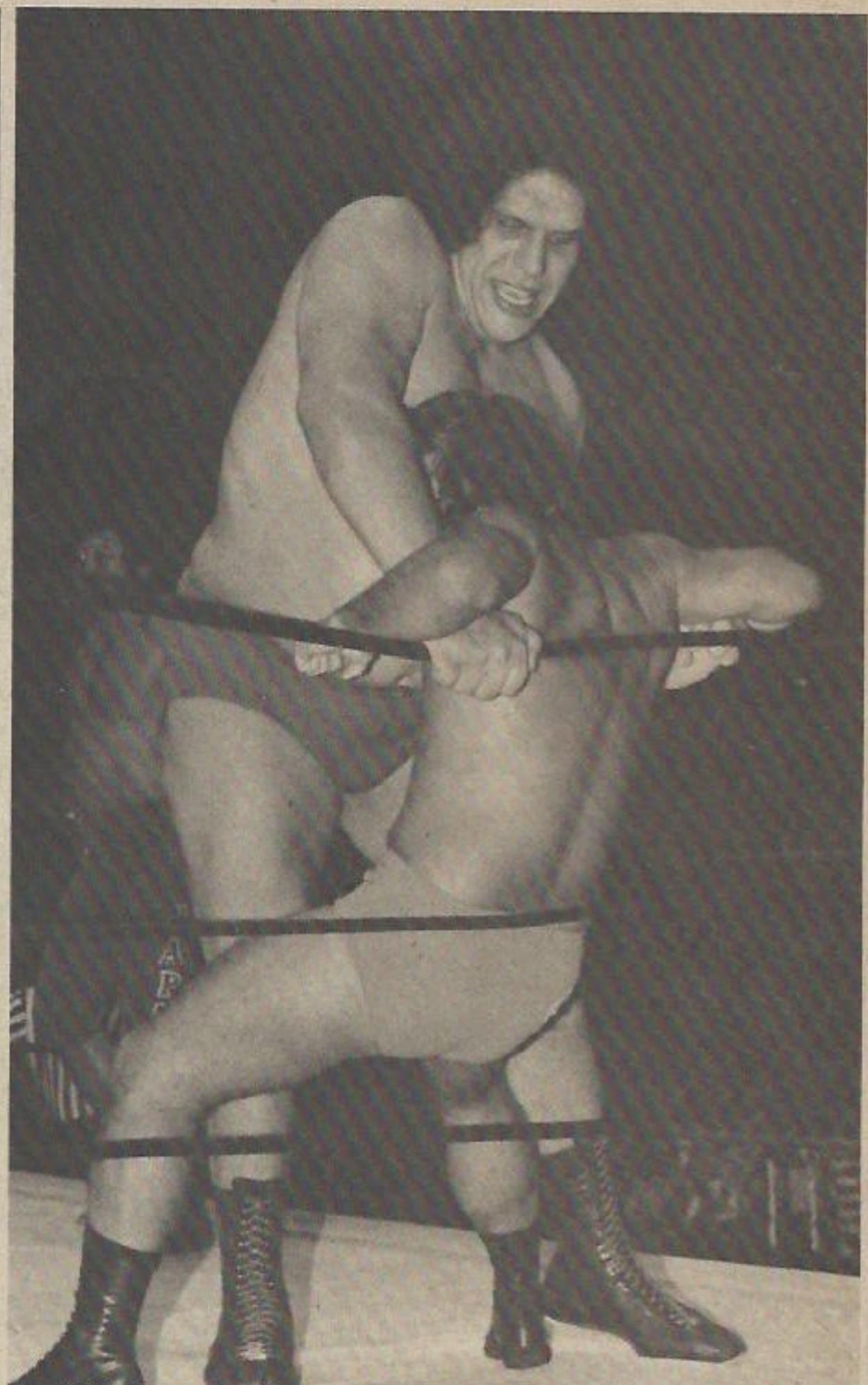


“

**People tend to divide
wrestlers very neatly into
two categories, good
guy and bad guy.**

”

- Q: Let's talk about your career.
A: Fine.
Q: You've been teaming with Pat Patterson, haven't you?
A: Yes, yes, Pat is a fine man. Good, tough wrestlers. We work well together.
Q: Any doubts about his rule-breaker past?
A: I don't think Patterson can be called a scientific wrestler.
Q: That's a strange remark.
A: People tend to divide wrestlers very neatly into two categories, good guy and bad guy. You must allow for men like Patterson or Ric Flair, who are not really scientific wrestlers, more like well-intentioned brawlers.
Q: How about a very pointed question?
A: Shoot.
Q: Do you trust Patterson?



Andre the Giant is a worried man. For some reason, he is convinced that one of his friends in the sport is going to turn on him. The days when wrestlers could trust each other are gone, he said. Today you can be stabbed in the back at any time, by any man.

- A: Uh, yes.
Q: You seem hesitant.
A: It'll come out wrong.
Q: Take your time, explain.
A: I am reaching the stage where I trust few people. As I see the treachery, I bring up my guard and grow more careful. I trust Patterson as much as I trust any wrestler.
Q: Which isn't much?
A: Times make you careful.
Q: How does Andre the Giant view himself at this stage in his career?
A: I work very hard in perfecting and polishing my maneuvers. I am never satisfied. I don't care about my undefeated record because that does not mean I am perfect. You can never be



Andre has all the respect in the world for Bob Backlund (above) and Mike Graham (below). He did not specifically say that he feared either of these two would turn against him, but he did not rule anybody out. Admittedly, he doesn't know who to trust.

perfect so you must always work and strive to be the very best you are capable of becoming.

Q: You still want the championship?

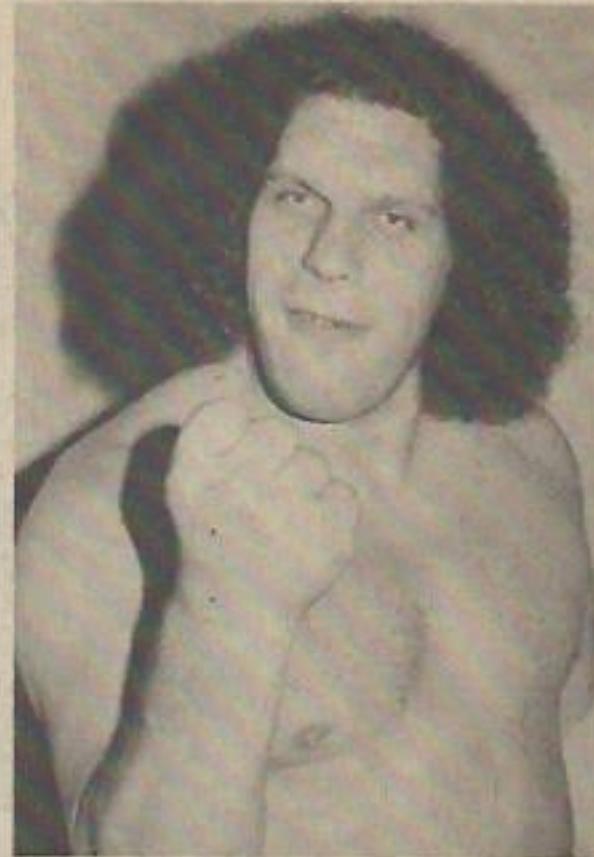
A: Which one? (Smiles)

Q: Take your pick.

A: Bill, if I didn't care about championships, I wouldn't be wrestling.

Q: Frustration at missing titles must bother you.

A: Of course. Sometimes I wonder if I am jinxed. Everything that can deprive a man of a title happens to me. It is very depressing at times. But you cannot live in the past. You must look forward into



“

Sometimes I wonder if I am jinxed. Everything that can deprive a man of a title happens to me. It is very depressing at times.

”

the future.

Q: Why don't we play the name game, I give you a name, you give me a response?

Q: Harley Race.

A: Good champion, hasn't much longer to last.

Q: Dusty Rhodes.

A: Talented, smart, reliable. One of my best friends.

Q: Mil Mascaras.

A: Great man. One of the all-time greats.

Q: Ken Patera.

A: Sniveling bum. I'm tired of hearing how he wasted his talent. Far as I am concerned, he never had much to squander.

Q: Bob Backlund.

A: Nice kid, works hard, fine champion.

Q: Andre the Giant.

A: Wants to be happy.

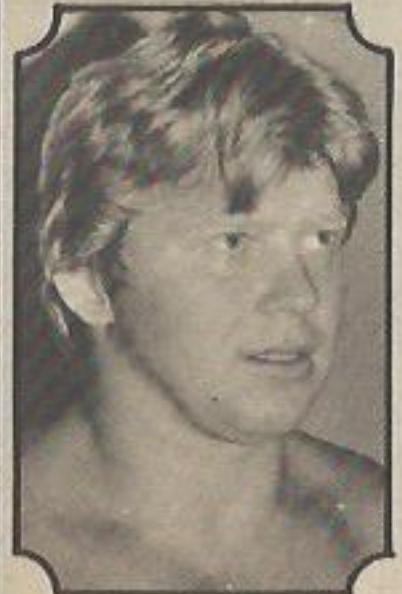
Q: Thanks, Andre.

□

INSIDE WRESTLING'S OFFICIAL RATINGS

These Ratings Are Compiled With The Assistance Of Top Wrestlers, Promoters,
And Reporters. They Are Universally Accepted As Official

World
Wrestling
Federation

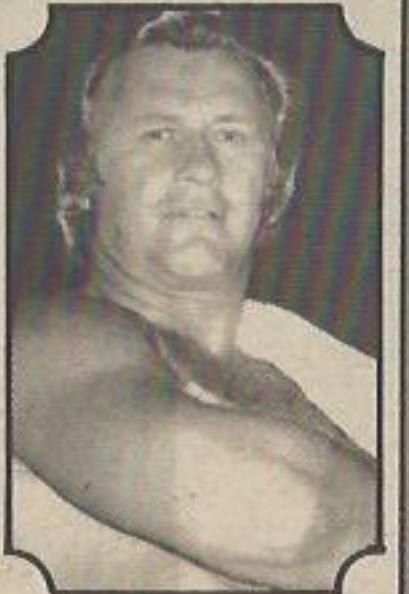


Champion: BOB
BACKLUND



1—HULK HOGAN

American
Wrestling
Association

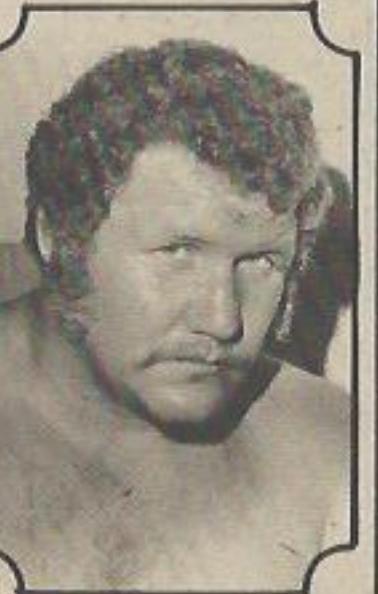


Champion: NICK
BOCKWINKEL



1—CRUSHER

National
Wrestling
Alliance



Champion: HARLEY RACE



1—MR. WRESTLING II

Most Popular
Wrestlers



1—BRUNO
SAMMARTINO



2—DUSTY RHODES

Most Hated
Wrestlers

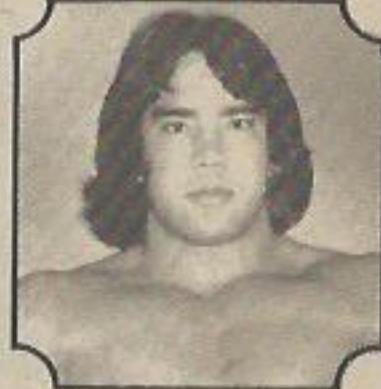


1—LARRY ZBYSZKO



2—KEN PATERA

Tag Teams



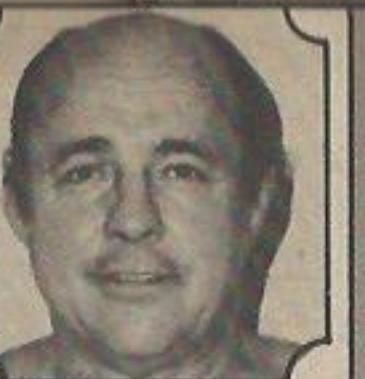
1—RICK STEAMBOAT
& JAY YOUNGBLOOD



1—HULK HOGAN



1—CRUSHER



1—MR. WRESTLING II



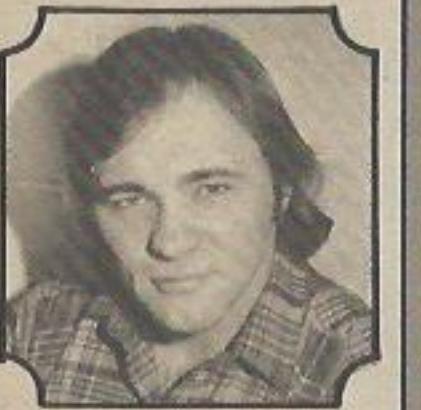
2—DUSTY RHODES



2—KEN PATERA



2—KEN PATERA



2—VERNE GAGNE



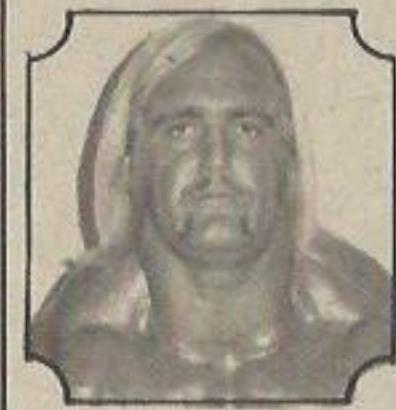
2—DUSTY RHODES



3—BOB BACKLUND



3—TERRY FUNK



2—THE SAMOANS



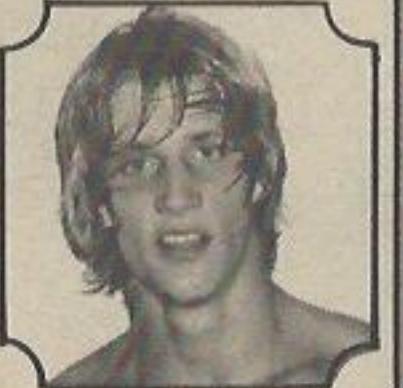
3—LARRY ZBYSZKO



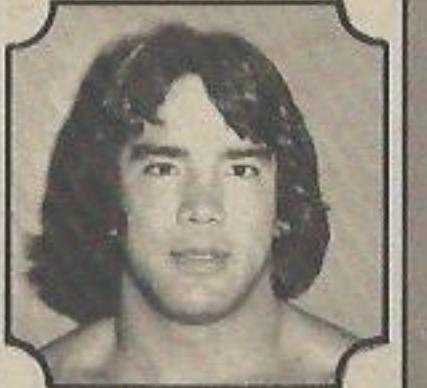
3—DINO BRAVO



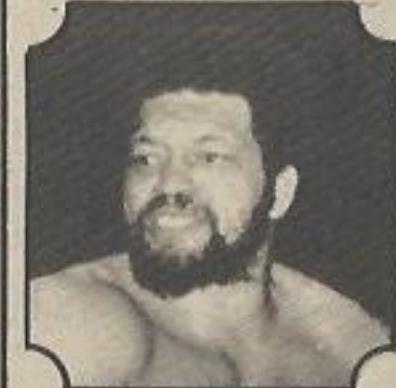
3—JIMMY SNUKA



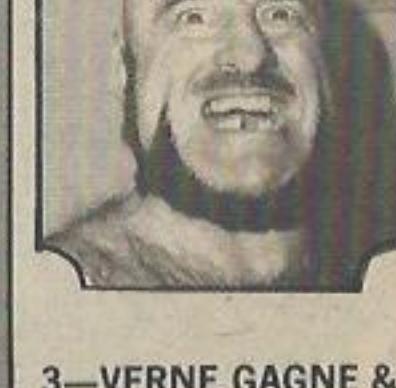
4—ANDRE THE GIANT



4—HULK HOGAN



3—VERNE GAGNE & MAD DOG VACHON



4—PAT PATTERSON

4—GREG GAGNE

4—KEVIN VON ERICH

5—RICK STEAMBOAT

5—ERNIE LADD

3—VERNE GAGNE & MAD DOG VACHON

5—IVAN PUTSKI
6—TONY ATLAS
7—AFA THE SAMOAN
8—TITO SANTANA
9—SIKA THE SAMOAN
10—BOBBY DUNCUM

5—MAD DOG VACHON
6—BILLY ROBINSON
7—JESSE VENTURA
8—SUPER DESTROYER II
9—CRUSHER BLACKWELL
10—ADRIAN ADONIS

5—MANNY FERNANDEZ
6—JIM BRUNZELL
7—STAN STASIAK
8—MIL MASCARAS
9—RIC FLAIR
10—THE ASSASSIN

6—MR. WRESTLING II
7—PAT PATTERSON
8—IVAN PUTSKI
9—WAHOO McDANIEL
10—KEVIN VON ERICH

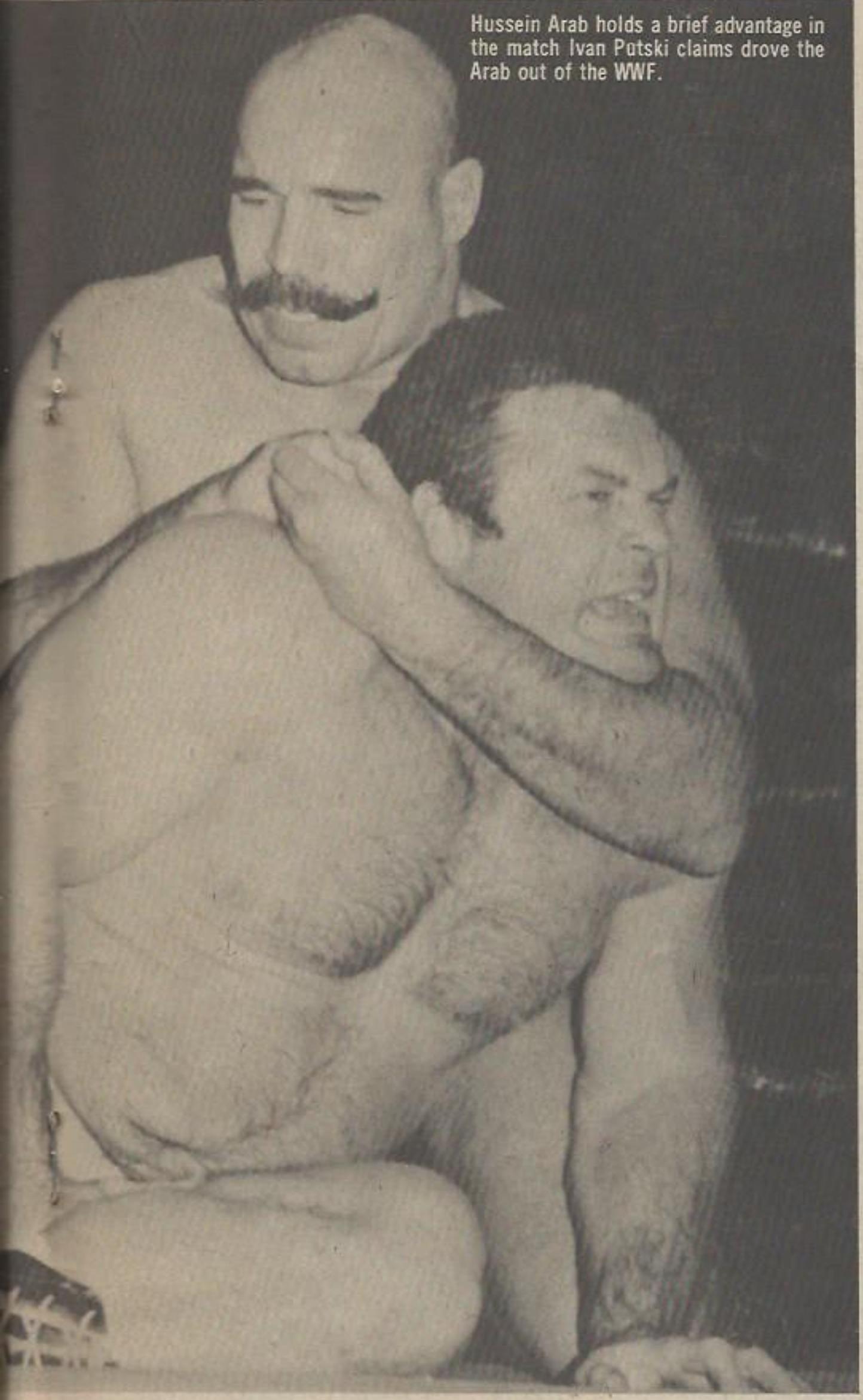
6—MASKED SUPERSTAR
7—ABDULLAH THE BUTCHER
8—EDDY MANSFIELD
9—GREG VALENTINE
10—OX BAKER

4—IVAN PUTSKI & TITO SANTANA
5—IVAN KOLOFF & ALEXIS SMIRNOFF
6—BRYAN ST. JOHN & STANLEY LANE
7—RAY STEVENS & GREG VALENTINE
8—MR. HITO & MR. SAKURADA
9—THE TWIN DEVILS
10—TOMMY & EDDIE GILBERT

Ivan Putski
vs. Hussein Arab

A MENACE
IS DRIVEN
FROM THE WWF

DOODGE



Hussein Arab holds a brief advantage in the match Ivan Putski claims drove the Arab out of the WWF.

ANY MAN WHO can force Hussein Arab out of an area has the right to brag. However, no man has the right to brag about something he didn't do.

Here are the facts: after wrestling Ivan Putski, Hussein Arab decided it would be a good idea to leave the WWF. The hated grappler quickly packed his bags and headed for the Mid-Atlantic area. The WWF was rid of one of its most despised rulebreakers.

Ivan saw Arab leave and assumed the grappler left because of their match. After all, they were supposed to wrestle again. Rather than fulfill the contract, Arab disappeared. Ivan exulted, "I drove Hussein Arab from the WWF!"

At first, no one disputed Putski's claim. Instead, everyone offered congratulations. Some said that this was even greater than winning a title. Putski was the hero of the hour.

Then the news came from the Mid-Atlantic area. Arab was enraged that anyone could call him a coward. He sent a letter to WWF headquarters.

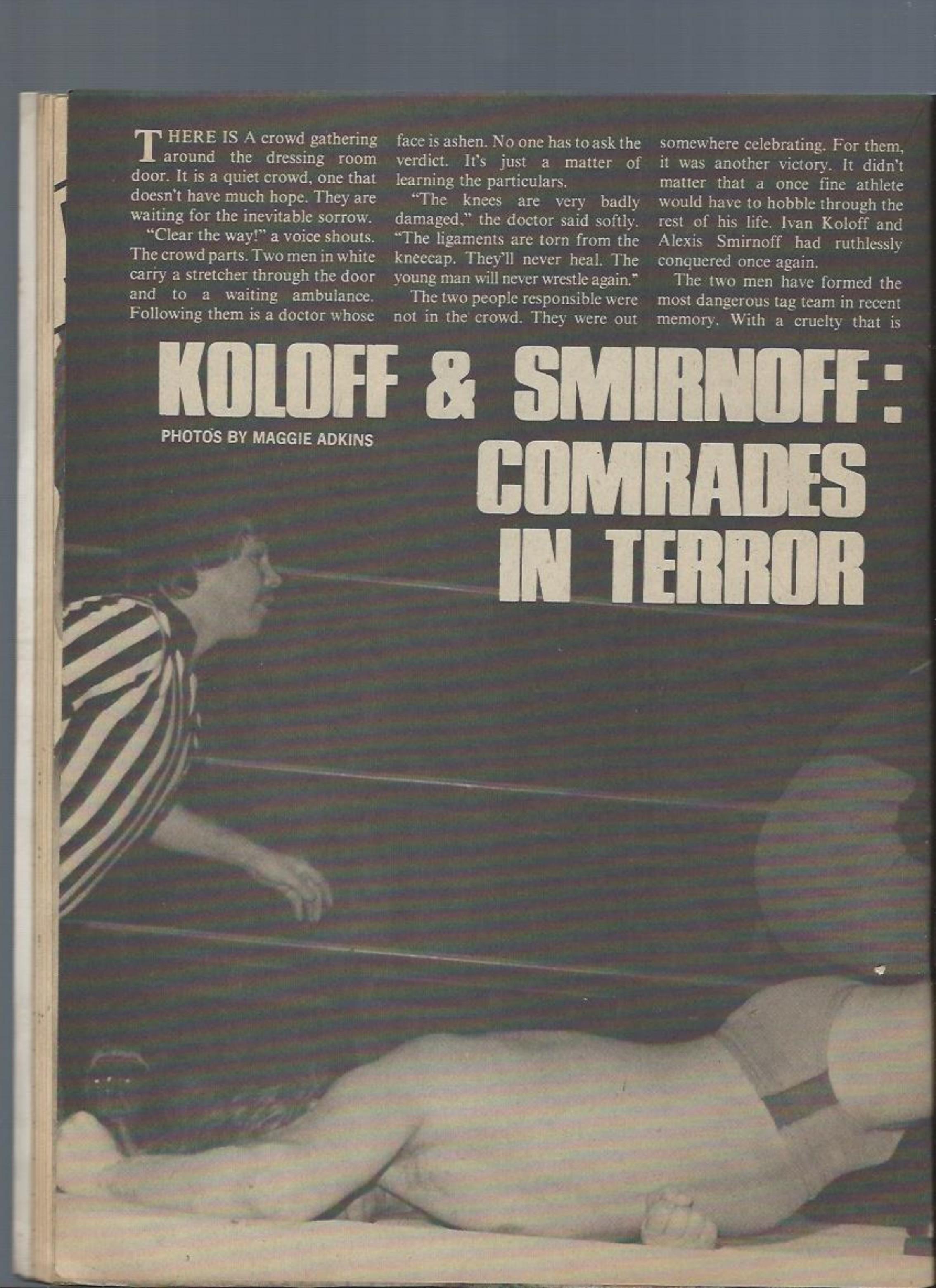
"How dare that rat!" the letter began. "Putski is a slimy liar! A damned slimy liar! I'll have his head on a platter! How dare he!"

"For that matter, how dare you let him! You know why I left the area. They offered me twice as much money as you sleazy cheapskates! Every WWF official knows the truth! Why don't you shut Putski up? You are legally responsible for his ugly slanders! I'll see you people in court. I'm suing you all for \$1 million! No one destroys my reputation! I'll sue you all!"

(Continued on page 54)

Many times in his illustrious career, Ivan Putski has been forced to drive a dangerous virus from the WWF. Others tried and failed. Only Putski, with his tenacious courage and enormous strength, had the qualifications to throw Hussein Arab out of the WWF

PHOTOS BY BILL APTER



THERE IS A crowd gathering around the dressing room door. It is a quiet crowd, one that doesn't have much hope. They are waiting for the inevitable sorrow.

"Clear the way!" a voice shouts. The crowd parts. Two men in white carry a stretcher through the door and to a waiting ambulance. Following them is a doctor whose

face is ashen. No one has to ask the verdict. It's just a matter of learning the particulars.

"The knees are very badly damaged," the doctor said softly. "The ligaments are torn from the kneecap. They'll never heal. The young man will never wrestle again."

The two people responsible were not in the crowd. They were out

somewhere celebrating. For them, it was another victory. It didn't matter that a once fine athlete would have to hobble through the rest of his life. Ivan Koloff and Alexis Smirnoff had ruthlessly conquered once again.

The two men have formed the most dangerous tag team in recent memory. With a cruelty that is

KOLOFF & SMIRNOFF: COMRADES IN TERROR

PHOTOS BY MAGGIE ADKINS

both ugly and reckless, they pursue victory without regard for any decent impulse. If an opponent's career is finished, that's the breaks. They give no mercy and expect none.

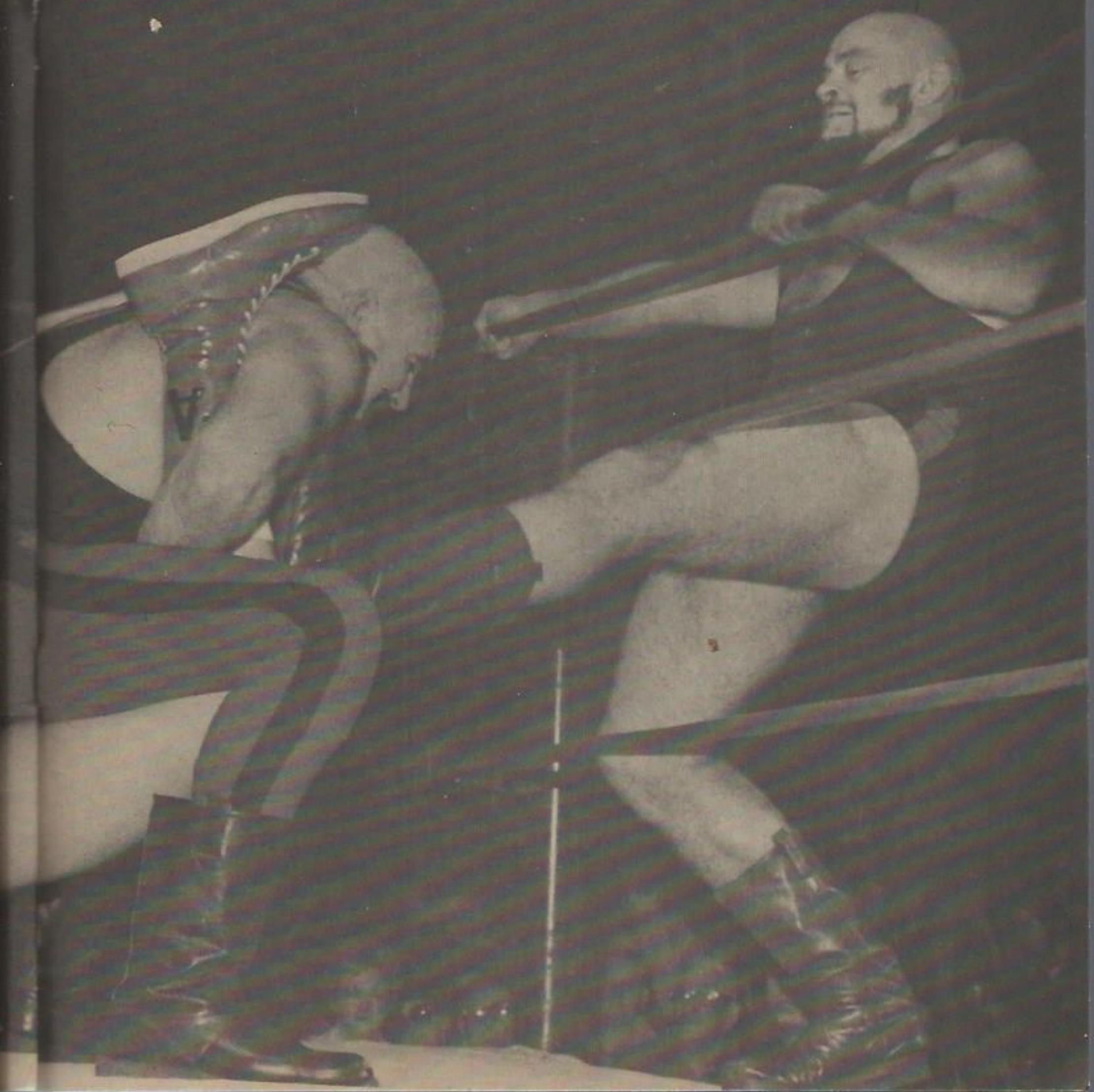
This is a frightening team. Ivan Koloff has been on many notorious tag teams; responsible for many injured grapplers. Yet, never has he so dominated an area as

he has with Alexis Smirnoff. There is a horrible ferocity in their movements that makes even hardened veterans tremble.

"They have no limits," Ole Anderson says with rage. "There is nothing they won't do to win. I've seen them destroy people even though they had the match. It's savage! Absolutely savage!"

"When I wrestle them, I forget all about wrestling science. It's a street battle, the kind you have at three in the morning when bile bites the back of your throat. Some people think it's no better than animal warfare. They're wrong. We think about how to best—or worst—punish the other guy. It's

(Continued on page 56)



NEWS FROM THE

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to: Correspondent Editor, Box 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571

CHICAGO, IL

By Ken Zalewski



NICK BOCKWINKEL
vs.
BRUISER

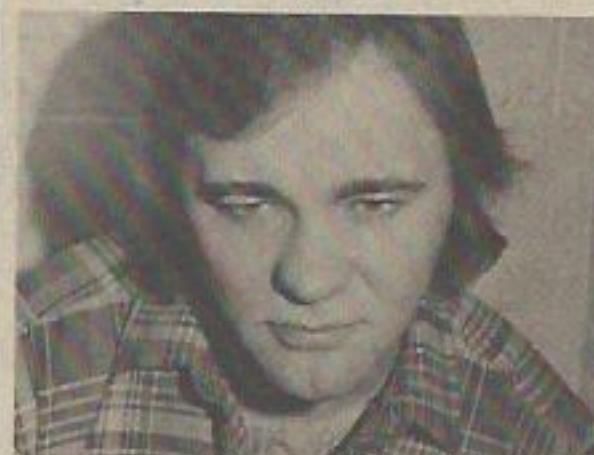


The main event on this great card featured a furious title match between AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel and Dick the Bruiser. At ringside was Bruiser Brodie, acting as Bockwinkel's "manager" this night. Brodie stood calmly until Bockwinkel was virtually out on his feet, then tried to interfere. However, Bruiser beat him back and the vicious match ended with both men counted out.

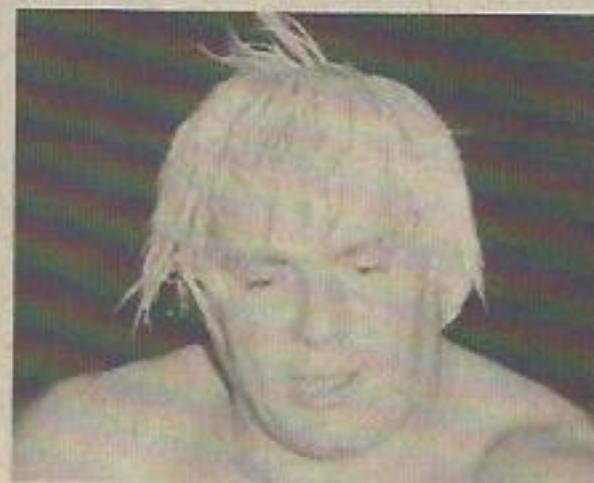
OTHER BOUTS: Dino Bravo won by disqualification over Adrian Adonis . . . Moose Cholak squashed the Bounty Hunter . . . Steve Olsonowski drew with Rick Hunter.

ASBURY PARK, NJ

By Ed Ferrara



LARRY ZBYSZKO
vs.
PAT PATTERSON

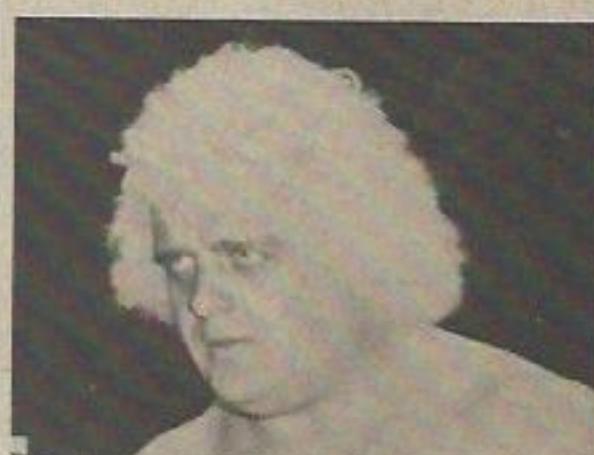


Intercontinental champion Pat Patterson went against the self-proclaimed new living legend, Larry Zbyszko. Patterson controlled the early part of the match, beating Zbyszko badly. Halfway through the bout, Zbyszko tossed Patterson out of the ring, followed, grabbed his head and banged it against a table. Recovering, Patterson body-slammed Zbyszko onto the wooden floor. Zbyszko climbed into the ring, Patterson a second behind. Too late. Zbyszko won by a count-out.

OTHER BOUTS: The Samoans edged Tito Santana and Rene Goulet . . . Dominic DeNucci smeared Davy O'Hannon . . . Baron Scicluna needed a metal pipe to beat Johnny Rodz.

ORLANDO, FL

By Earl Roop



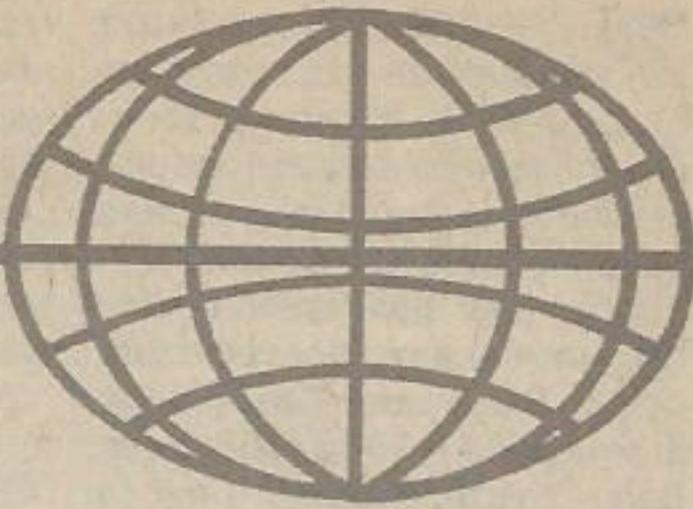
DUSTY RHODES
vs.
ERNIE LADD



The main event was a special challenge match between Dusty Rhodes and Ernie Ladd. Using an elbowsmash, Rhodes knocked Ladd to the canvas. As Ladd's manager Sir Oliver Humperdink started to interfere, Rhodes caught the bearded ghoul with another bionic elbow. A foreign object appeared in Ladd's hand. He used it on Rhodes, then tossed him out of the ring. Rhodes got back into the ring, pounded away on Ladd and finished off the big rulebreaker with a devastating bionic elbow.

OTHER BOUTS: Bugsy McGraw, Leroy Brown, and Super Destroyer won by disqualification over Mike Graham, Jim Garvin, and Jack Brisco.

WRESTLING CAPITALS

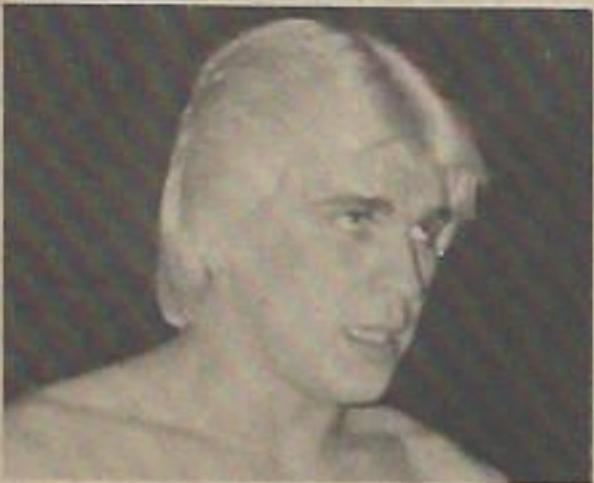


AUGUSTA, GA

By James Taylor



TERRY FUNK
vs.
TOMMY RICH



A powerful rivalry drew a huge crowd to the Civic Center. The winner would face NWA champion Harley Race the following week. Rich launched a frenzied assault as soon as the match began, withstanding a wild kneelift. After brutal brawling, Rich captured Funk and put him in the sleeper hold. After Rich was awarded the decision, Ken Patera snuck up and attacked Rich, touching off a wild melee.

OTHER BOUTS: The Superstar won by disqualification over Mr. Wrestling II . . . Ivan Koloff and Alexis Smirnoff cheated past Ole and Lars Anderson.

BOSTON, MA

By Ted Field



BRUNO SAMMARTINO
vs.
KEN PATERA

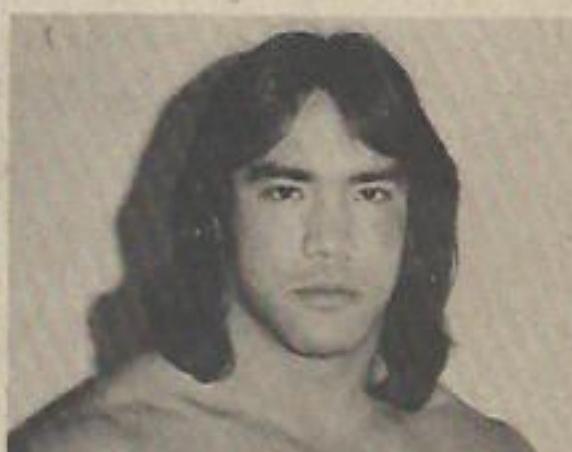


Strong man Ken Patera met Bruno Sammartino in a wild, furious match. From the outset, Sammartino appeared in control as he worked over Patera's left arm. Suddenly, Sammartino went berserk and flung Patera out of the ring, clobbering Patera into the ringsteps. Bruno climbed back into the ring. Patera hit Sammartino in the back of the head with a chair, then put on a swinging neck-breaker. Since Patera wouldn't release the hold, he lost on a disqualification.

OTHER BOUTS: Ivan Putski crushed Swede Hanson . . . Larry Zbyszko won by count-out over Hussein Arab . . . Pat Patterson bested Lou Albano.

HALIFAX, VA

By Ricky Short



RICK STEAMBOAT
vs.
PAUL JONES



An old, bitter feud came to Halifax when Rick Steamboat met Paul Jones. At first, both men wrestled scientifically. Then Jones started gouging Steamboat in the eye and trying to knee him in the groin. Steamboat's new-found maturity held up as he refused to lose his temper and kept to his game plan. Steamboat caught Jones in a figure four leglock. Suddenly, Steamboat released the hold and challenged Jones to continue, but Jones said he'd had enough.

OTHER BOUTS: Baron Von Raschke held off Jay Youngblood . . . Len Denton downed Abe Jacobs . . . Bill White halted David Patterson

THREE ARE FEW people in a railroad station at three o'clock in the morning. There are those who stayed too long at wherever they were. Others have no other place to go. A couple just decided that they had to be anywhere else but where they were. Then, there are those like Steve Keirn, who figure this is the best time to leave when you want to avoid goodbyes.

Steve leaned against a platform post as he waited for his train. The container of coffee in his hand was unopened and forgotten. The newspaper, as far as Steve could see, was filled with news of other people. There was a gnawing in Steve's belly that had nothing to do with hunger. He couldn't understand. How at the same time could he be terrified and never more sure of himself?

The sound of the train was heard in the distance. Reflexively, Steve touched the ticket in his pocket. New York, New York. Somehow, it seemed as if that was always his destination.

The train stopped. The doors opened. For a moment, Steve thought he would run away. Then, decisively, he walked through the train doors. Come hell or high water, he was on his way.

Most people in the train were asleep. That was okay with Steve. He didn't feel like company. There was nothing anybody had to say to him.

The train started. Steve looked up at the emergency cord. One yank and the train would stop. He'd get off,

resume his life, be with his friends, and be cheered by the fans who loved him. Instead of reaching for the cord, Steve clenched his fists.

It was a long train ride, from Miami to New York, but that suited Steve fine. He was in no hurry. The rocking of the train lulled him to sleep.

There were dreams. Steve

dreamed of failure, of being defeated in his first WWF match. He also dreamed of monsters that smothered him, demons who sapped his strength, and towering buildings that came crashing down on his head. He awoke when the porter announced breakfast was being served.

Steve walked to the dining

WHAT IS STEVE KEIRN DOING IN THE WWF ?



Steve Keirn reaches back to throw a right at Johnny Valiant's open mouth in a match in Miami (above) and goes high in the air to smash Pak Song's leg in Tampa (opposite right).

What motivated Steve Keirn to forsake the warmth and mellow beaches of Florida for the riotous tumult of the WWF? What propelled him on the long train ride, consumed by inner dilemmas, besieged by doubt? Why did Steve Keirn come to the WWF?

car. In it were hungry travelers ending their vacations. Steve looked at them carefully. These were people from the Northeast. He would soon be living among them. Would they accept him? Could he accept them? Steve didn't eat a hearty breakfast.

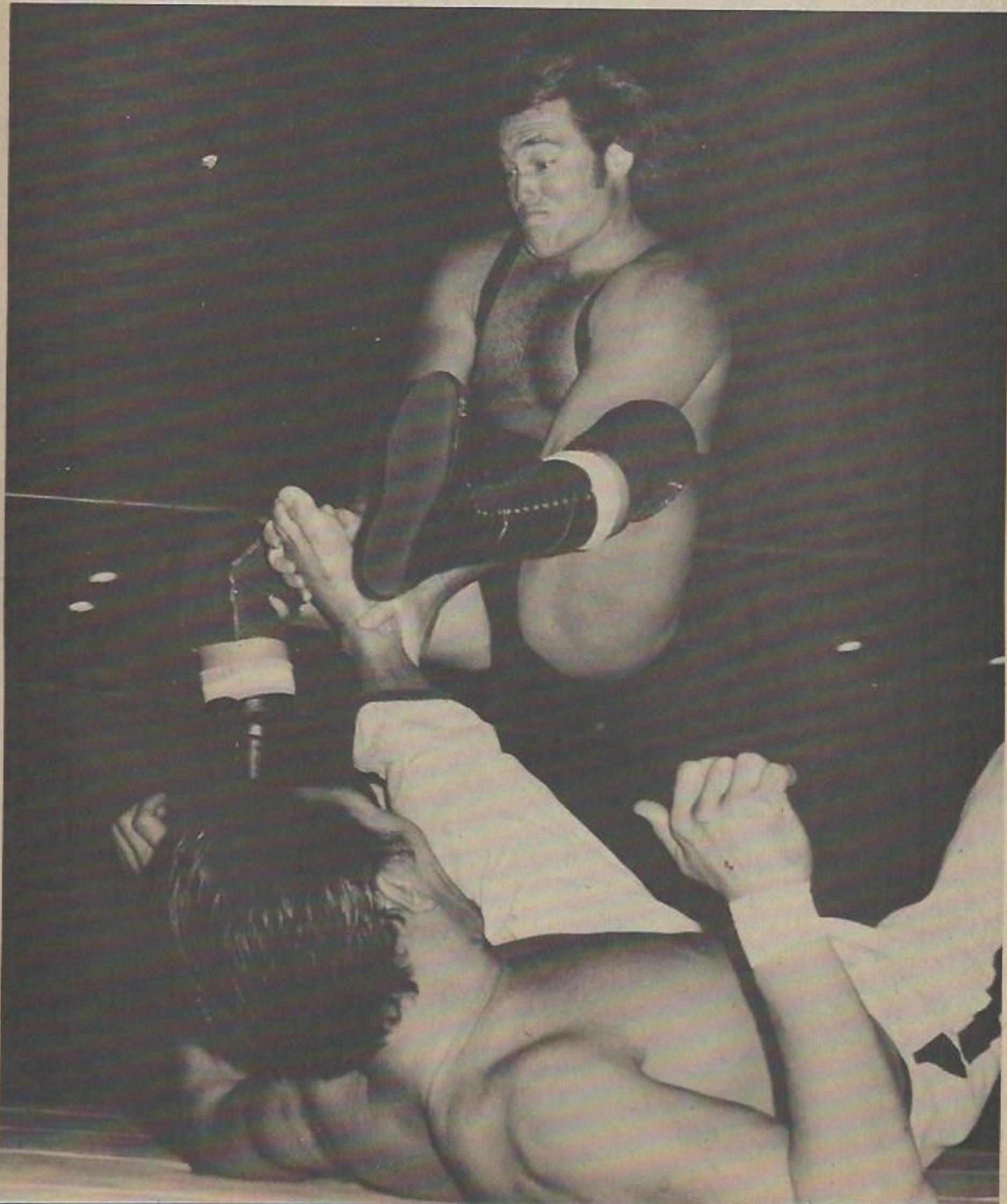
It takes more than 30 hours to go from Miami to New York.

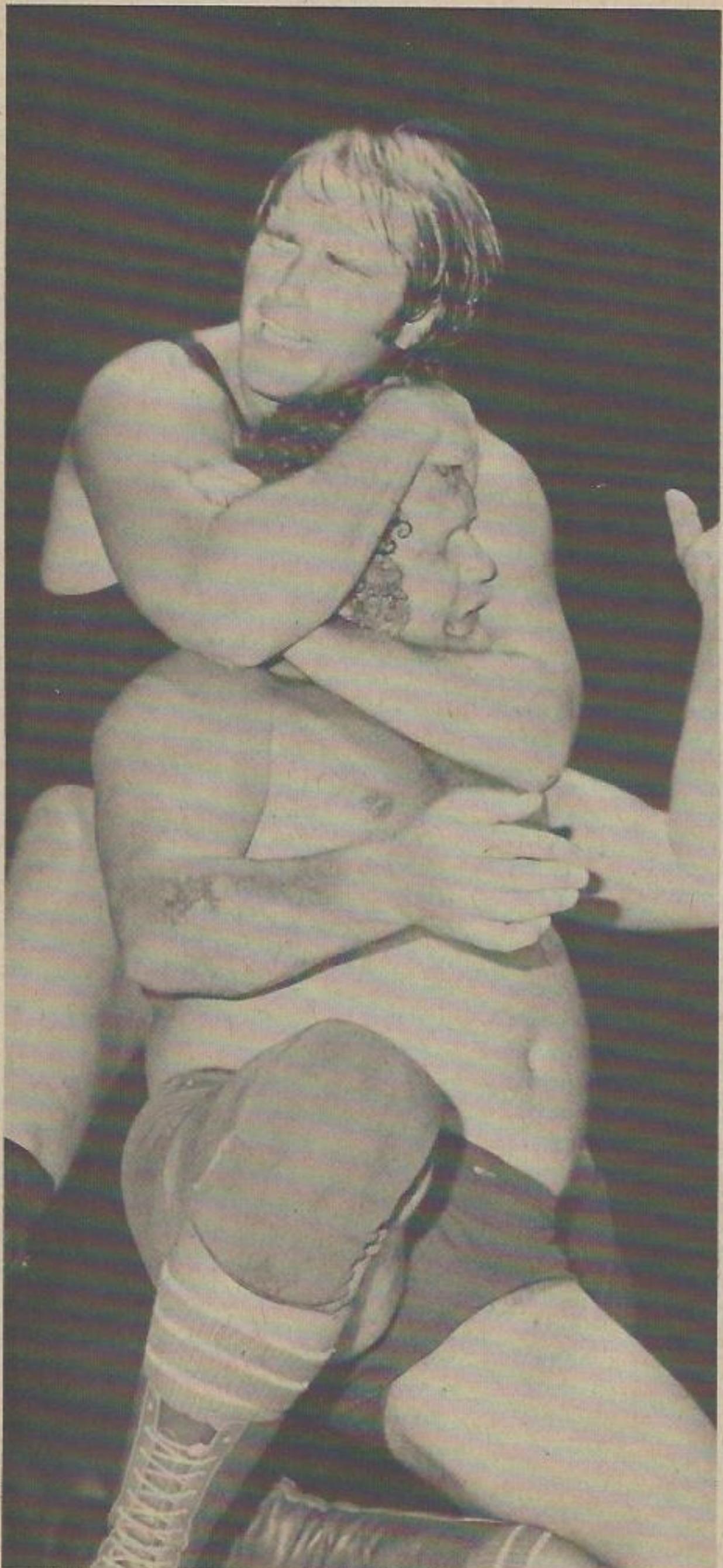
Some people say that's the difference between two different worlds. Steve had to find out if that was true.

He thought back to a week ago. Representatives of the WWF had offered him a contract he couldn't refuse. It wasn't the money, though, that made the offer so tempting. No one was more surprised than

Steve when something inside him forced him to accept. What about the WWF drew him so powerfully? He was going on this trip to find out.

Strange. Up until the moment he saw the contract, Steve had been happy just where he was. He had never even considered leaving the NWA. Then, when the contract was placed before





Keirn uses all his strength to apply a sleeper hold, coming very close to capturing the NWA title in Orlando. Keirn arrived and disappeared from the WWF area, but the offer that brought him there still remains.

him, Steve realized there was nothing he wanted more than to go north.

It had been hard saying goodbye to his friends. Most of them didn't understand. Others felt betrayed. A few were happy for him and wished him luck. So many times, he wanted to tell them he changed his mind. Who needs the north, anyway. At that moment, something inside would strangle the words. He got the urge for going and he simply had to go.

At each stop, Steve thought about getting off and heading back. He only got off when they reached New York. Stiff, tired, a bit scared, he got off at Penn Station. A policeman told him the station was in the same building as Madison Square Garden. Asking a couple more people for directions, Steve made his way to the famous arena.

A guard stopped him. "Nothing going on here now, buddy," the man said. "No sense going in there now."

"I'm going to be wrestling there," Steve said, "and I just wanted to see what it's like."

"You'll see soon enough, then. I can't let you in."

Keirn took a cab to the WWF offices. However, his scheduled appointment was delayed. Keirn waited. And waited. When the local promoter came into the reception area, Keirn was gone.

Why didn't Steve Keirn stay in the WWF? Did he feel his trip north had been a mistake? Or did Steve Keirn suddenly realize he had too much unfinished business in Florida?

One plane ride and Steve Keirn was home. □

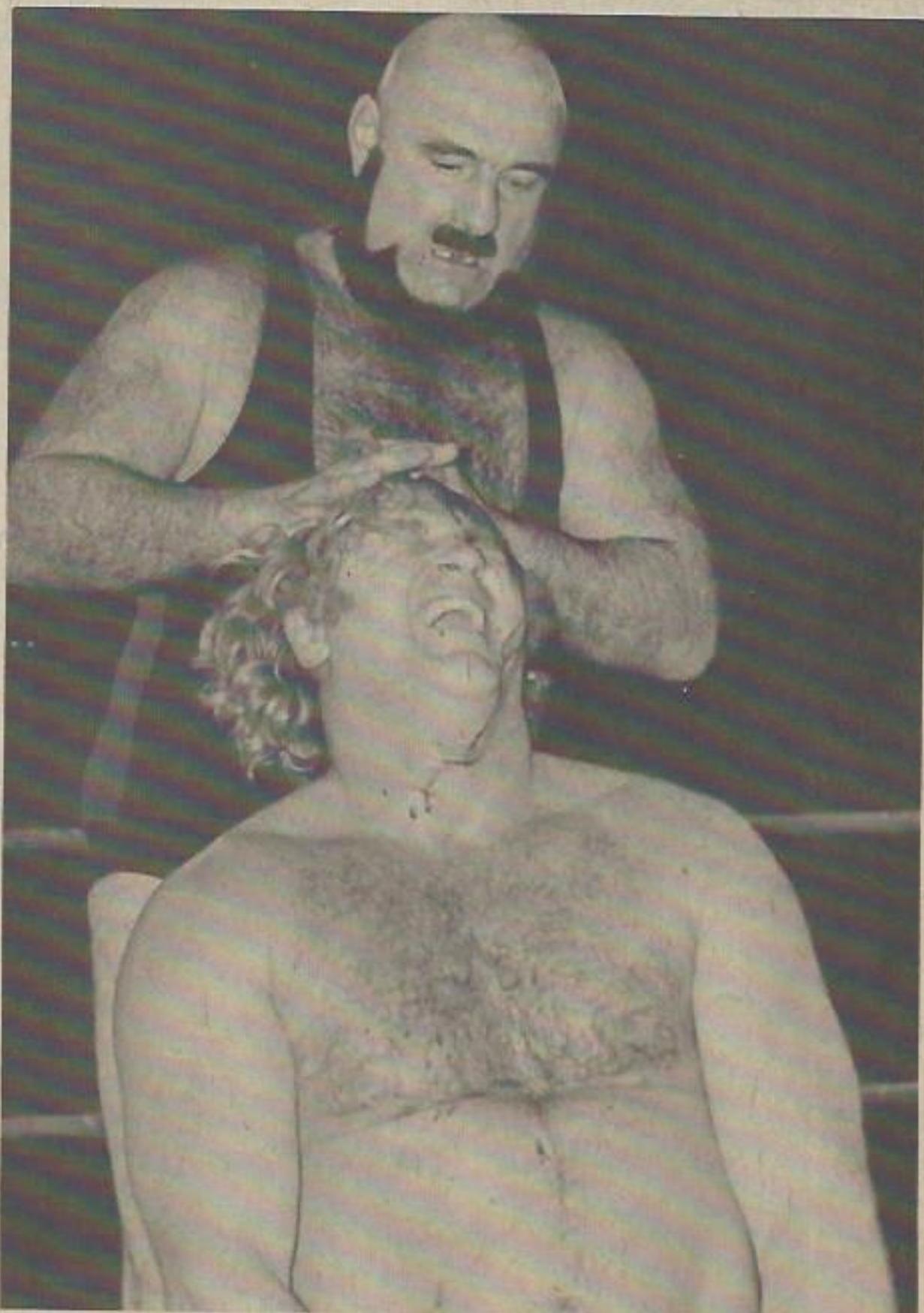
INSIDE WRESTLING

47

CAPSULE PROFILE

REALIZED A LIFETIME dream with the winning of the AWA tag team title with Verne Gagne ("About time they stopped cheatin' me of my just due") . . . Some thought Gagne would exact a moderating influence on his often bizarre behavior ("Ain't been able to stop or change me know") . . . Still a wildeyed brawler ("I ain't no different than I was years ago. I like to beat on people then and I surely enjoy it now") . . . A throwback to the old days of warring and brawling ("I don't go none for the dainty style of wrestlin'. I like to move in and mix 'em up, batter the boobs from here to there") . . . He and Gagne are an odd couple ("Verne's a good man. Tough, fair, knows how to handle a partner. He ain't on some ego trip. I like him") . . . Particularly despises AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel ("Man ain't got no guts. Without guts you're nothin' in this sport. He's afraid of a real fight and a real wrestler.

MAD DOG VACHON



Mad Dog Vachon bloodies AWA champion Nick Bockwinkel, a man he says "has no guts." In years past, one of the AWA area's premier rulebreakers, Vachon continues to be cheered as Verne Gagne's tag team partner. He claims, however, that he is still the same brawler he always was.

That's why he runs away before he gets his face rearranged") . . . Doesn't care for Bobby Heenan ("Hah, calls himself Brains. Sits on whatever brains he got. Guy lives on others. Hates

managers. Lousy parasites") . . . Refuses to compromise his principles ("I'm what I am. Ain't never sold out and ain't about to now. I live by my rules and no lame tells me otherwise"). □

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Each day, out of the thousands of letters we receive, hundreds of them are from fans asking the whereabouts of their favorite wrestler. In this special column, we will try to answer the questions you ask the most!



HUSSEIN ARAB

Driven from the WWF, Hussein Arab seeks to hide his name under the name "Iron Sheik." Fans in the Mid-Atlantic hate Arab as much as WWF fans did. He has threatened both Rick Steamboat and Jay Youngblood with bloody extermination.

DICK SLATER

Slithering his bad guy tentacles toward Florida. Slater doesn't hide his distaste for the Brisco brothers and Dusty Rhodes. Once Slater decides to invade an area, he marshals all his energies to the systematic destruction of every scientific wrestler.



DUTCH SAVAGE

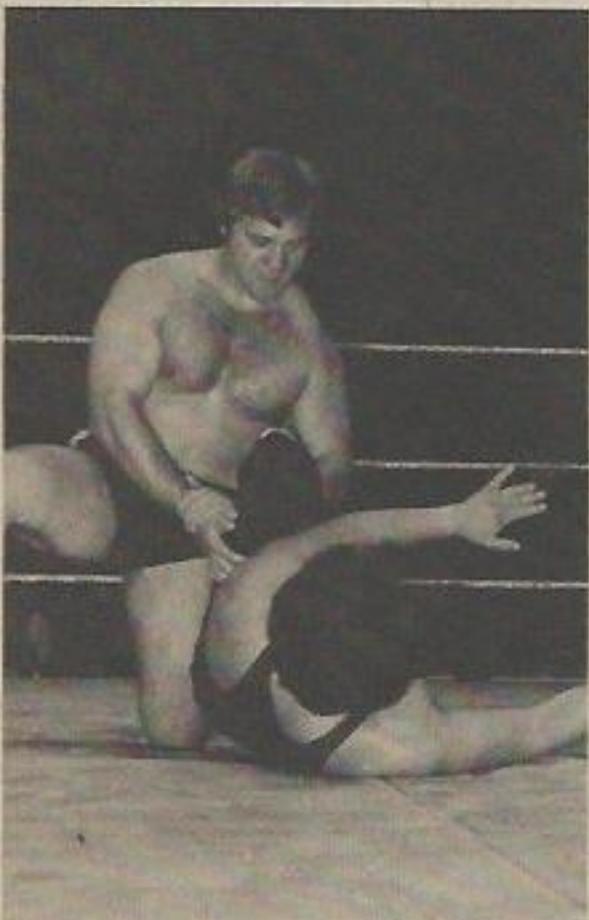
Veteran is still delighting fans in the Pacific Northwest. He and Stan Stasiak have developed a warm friendship. Savage says he won't be content until all rulebreakers are banished from the Pacific Northwest. And Savage is just the man for the job.

JIM VALIANT

The "Handsome" one is in Memphis, where his eery antics and cool arrogance puzzle the public and peers. Wrestlers don't know how to handle Valiant, who has stated his desire for several titles, among them Harley Race's NWA belt.



ONE-O



(*Someone must understand Larry Zbyszko's plight. Criticized by fans, peers, and the press, Zbyszko wages a lonely war to salvage his career. Unfortunately, Zbyszko elected personal salvation at the expense of Bruno Sammartino. Despite repeated attempts to explain, Zbyszko remains a villified outcast. However, one man understands. Or tries to understand. That man is Zbyszko's former partner and co-holder of the WWF title, Tony Garea. From their homes, Garea and Zbyszko discuss the most shocking wrestling story of the year.*)



Picturephone photos courtesy of Bell Telephone.

TONY GAREA:

Larry, I've been calling and calling.

LARRY ZBYSZKO:

I got an unlisted number. Too

many crank calls.

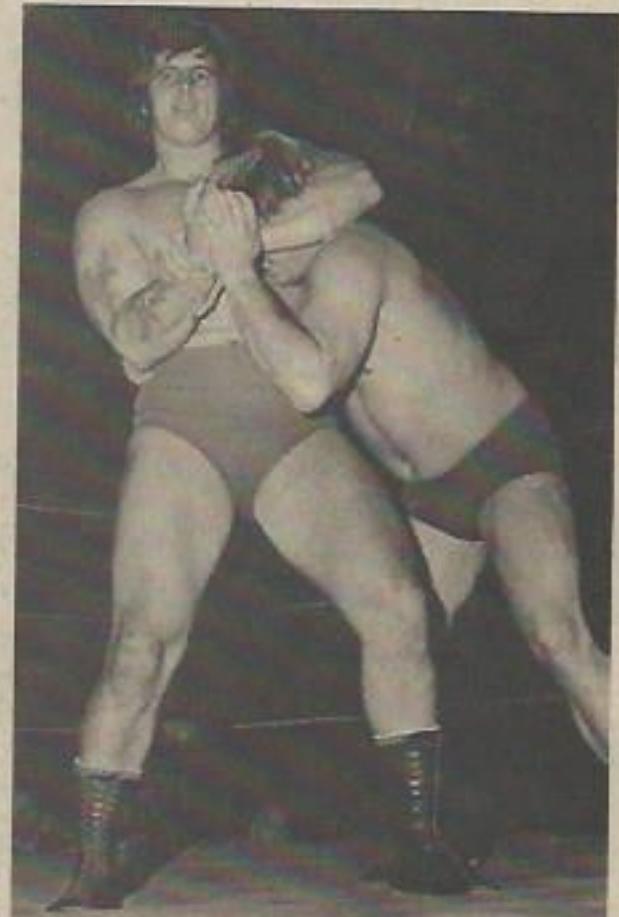
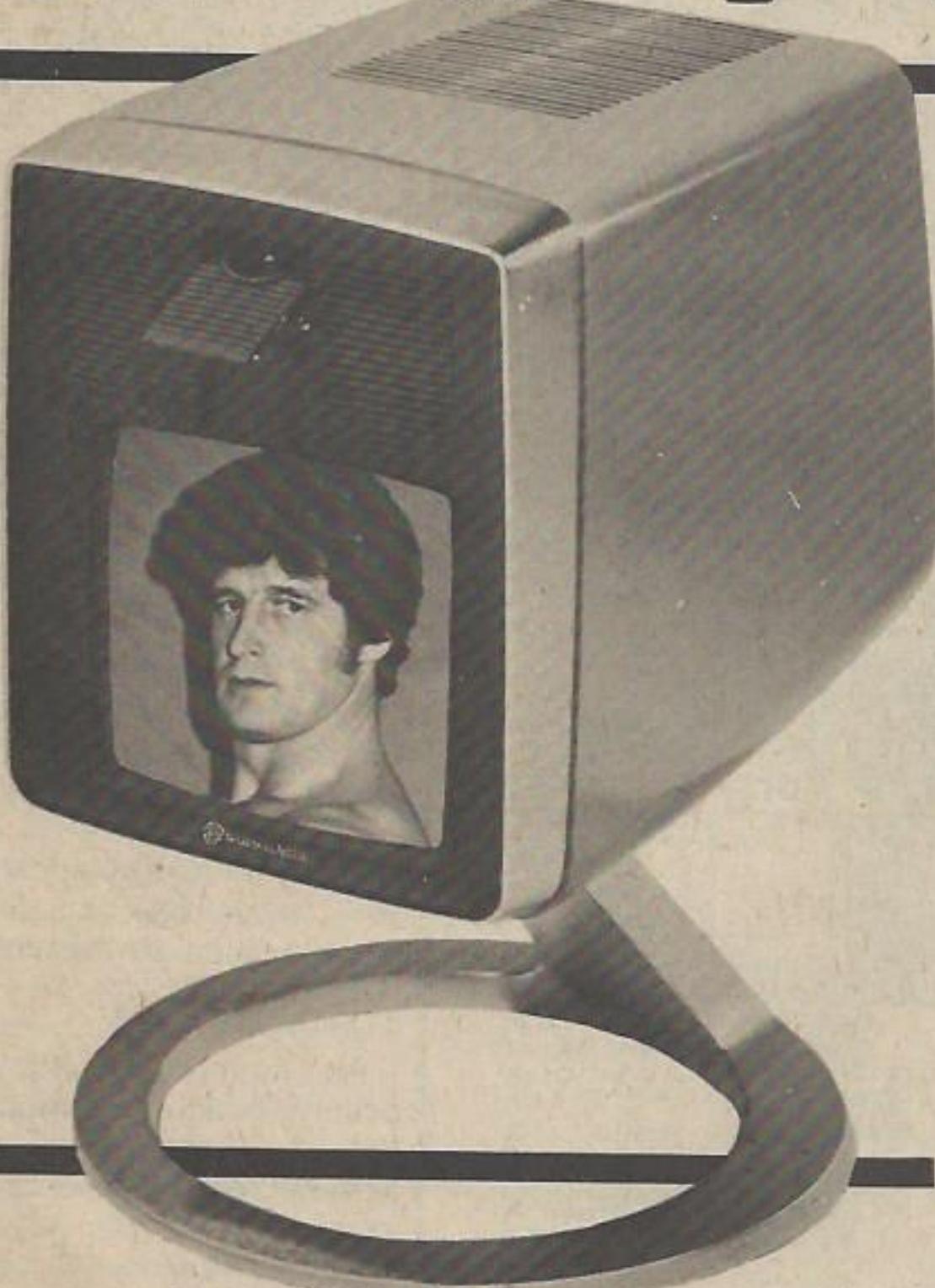
TG: How are things?

LZ: I won't lie. Kinda tough. Isn't easy being alone.

TG: Can I ask why?

Every month the telephone wires will crackle as two top grapplers rage and argue. We'll print the unedited transcript of their conversations, giving the fans a privileged glimpse at wrestlers which can be found nowhere else

ON ONE



LZ: Will you try and understand?

TG: I'll listen. Even if I don't agree, at least I'll hear you out.

LZ: Well, you know how Sammartino hogs attention. Always he's the number one, the living legend, the greatest. Always how *he* taught us, never allowing anyone to think we might have taught him.

TG: Go on.

LZ: I couldn't stand it anymore. I've got my own life to lead and won't take interference anymore. I had no choice, Tony. I tried talking to Bruno and all he'd say was, "Larry, I'll take care of you." I don't want anyone taking care of me. I've my own career and I want my own glory. Look, if I fall flat on my face, at least

I'm doing it by myself, on my own merits, as Larry Zbyszko, not Bruno's protege.

TG: Couldn't you do this without attacking Sammartino?

LZ: No.

TG: Please explain.

LZ: It was something deep inside me. Sammartino grew to represent something, a, oh, I had to get him out of the way. Maybe I always wondered if I really was as good as Sammartino. I had to prove that to myself. Me, I was the most important judge and jury.

TG: Did you?

LZ: Yes.

TG: Wouldn't it have proved more if you'd beaten him fairly?

LZ: Don't give me that . . .

TG: No, now listen, Larry, I'm
(Continued on page 64)

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BEHIND THE DOOR

(Continued from Page 8)

country has to offer. He did not make up the name "American Dream," it was given to him. I always felt that way, but I could never before admit to myself that I could break free of Oliver Humperdink's reins and fight for what I truly believed in."

That is, until recently. Sir Oliver Humperdink has publicly criticized McGraw for several tag team losses involving his wrestlers. Bugsy was very upset by this but said nothing. His feelings erupted, though, in a match in which he teamed with Volkoff against the team of Rhodes and Manny Fernandez in Tampa.

"Humperdink would not get off my case the whole match," McGraw said. "He blamed me for everything, Volkoff did wrong. This is not right. This Russian comes into our country and is treated better than myself, a full-fledged American. So I hit them both."

Bugsy McGraw, apparently, now waves his flag for the scientific side of wrestling.

• • •

An incredible coincidence occurred that I must relate. Not long ago, I had just come back to New York after doing some extensive traveling for an investigative story I'm working on. I was getting my notes together in the office when my editor looked at my bloodshot eyes and told me I was looking a bit rundown. He insisted I take a vacation.

I told him I was fine, that there was too much to do in the investigation to take time off. He insisted I go, however, promising that he would call me if anything broke on the story. I did not want the vacation,

but there are certain people you don't argue with, and my editor is one of them. I decided to take my vacation in St. Louis, where it just so happens, my investigation would have taken me next. And if I did just a little work while I was on vacation, my editor would never know.



Supposedly in St. Louis to take a rest from his grueling WWF schedule, Bob Backlund booked himself a match against Tom Andrews.

I was walking through the lobby of the Warwick Hotel in St. Louis when I heard a familiar voice call my name. I turned around to see a smiling Bob Backlund. "What the hell are you doing here?" I asked in utter astonishment. The last person I expected to see in St. Louis (other than my editor) was the WWF champion.

"Stu," he said. "The reason I came down here is Arnie [Backlund's manager Arnold Skoaland]. He said I was looking a bit sluggish lately. Said I should take a week off. So I said I would be vacationing in St. Louis, and when I got here, I booked a match on my own. What the heck."

I started laughing uncontrollably. "What are you laughing about," he asked. "I don't need a vacation. I want to keep wrestling. Arnie doesn't understand that."

"Let's go to lunch," I said, still laughing. "I'll explain." □

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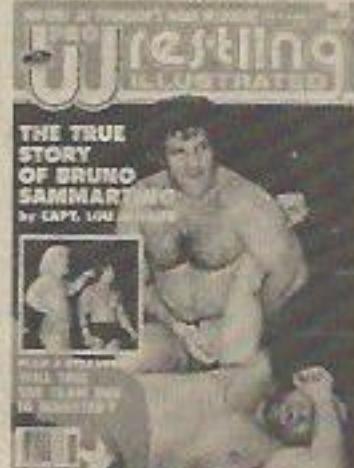
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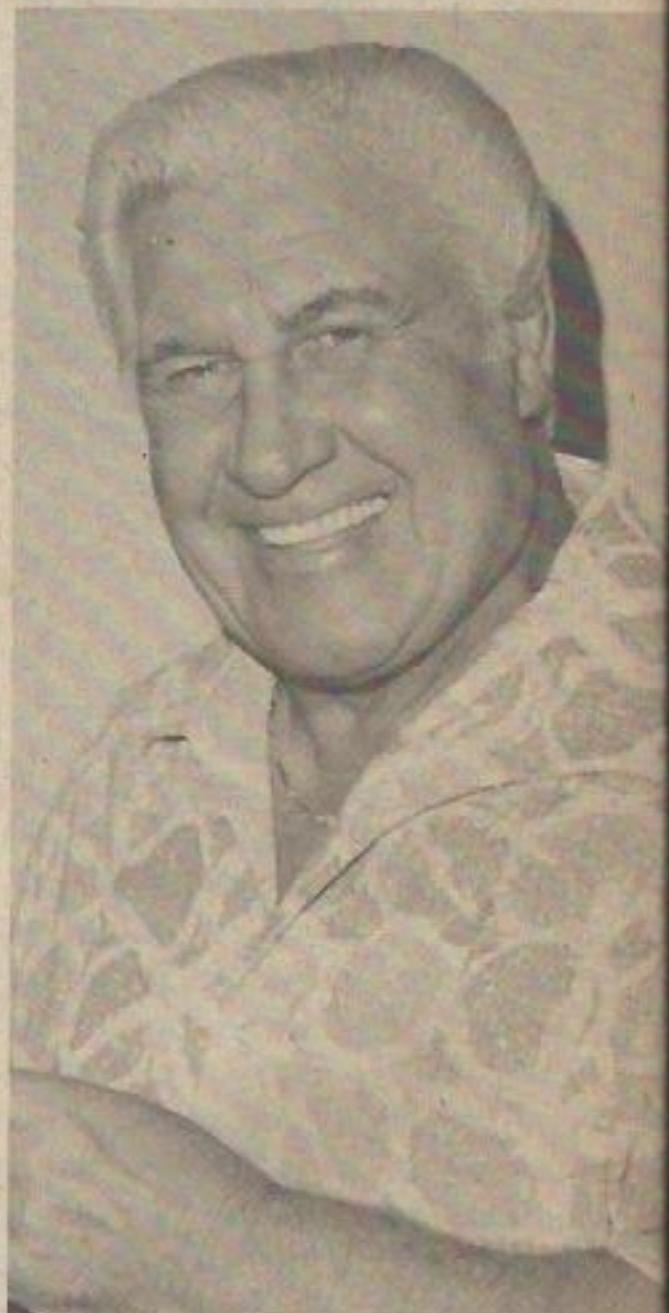
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ON THE ROAD

(Continued from Page 12)

whispered.

"Keep 'em off guard, get a better story that way," Matt said, slipping the card between the door and frame. I shrugged. He was the veteran. Brock grinned, placed his index finger against his lips and motioned for me to follow. I did. We made it into the room. That was our first mistake.



From just a short interview, Matt Brock deduced that Blassie would do anything within his managerial powers to make Hogan a champion.

A huge blond arm grabbed Matt's neck and lifted him off the ground, flung him into the living room and reached for me. I wish I could report some heroics, some instantaneous reaction, using my pen as a sword, biting, anything. All I did was gasp as this huge hand seized my throat and tossed me toward Brock. I toppled next to

him, bounced up and saw Hogan glowering and Blassie snickering.

"Using the cardit card, huh, Brock?" Blassie cackled.

"Always worked before." Brock rose, dusted off his worn plaid sports jacket and smiled. The man is incredibly cool. "I like to get there before the subjects do."

"This is our room," growled Hogan. He stepped toward us, a foot away. I stood, mustered strength and thought of something to say.

"Oh yeah?"

Everyone laughed. I blushed and slumped into the chair, about to witness the master reporter-charmer go into full tilt.

"This guy any good?" Brock pointed his pencil at Hogan.

"He's the greatest, pencil-neck geek, the best, he'll crush the . . ."

"Cut it, Blassie. Give it to me straight, cut the rhetoric. Is this muscle-bound baboon a goon or any good?"

Hogan's hand clenched Brock's shoulder. I winced, expecting to hear the sound of bone breaking. Yet Matt didn't move.

"You want the truth, the facts, you'll print them?"

"Go on," Matt said, ignoring Hogan.

"Away," Blassie snapped, dismissing Hogan, who slithered away and sat next to me. I smiled, he glared, and I watched Brock, feeling myself a hostage. "Hogan's got one thing no wrestler I've ever managed had: complete courage. Nothing deters him. He will bleed, break an arm, lose an eye, eat a chair, get hit by a pipe, doesn't matter. He's got guts. He has that killer instinct. Print that."

Brock grinned. He had his story. I think. By now I was completely bewildered. Simply leaving with my head intact made me thankful. As we climbed into the cab, I asked Matt what story he got.

"Blassie will stick by Hogan, put all his resources into making him champ." Matt Brock had done it again. □

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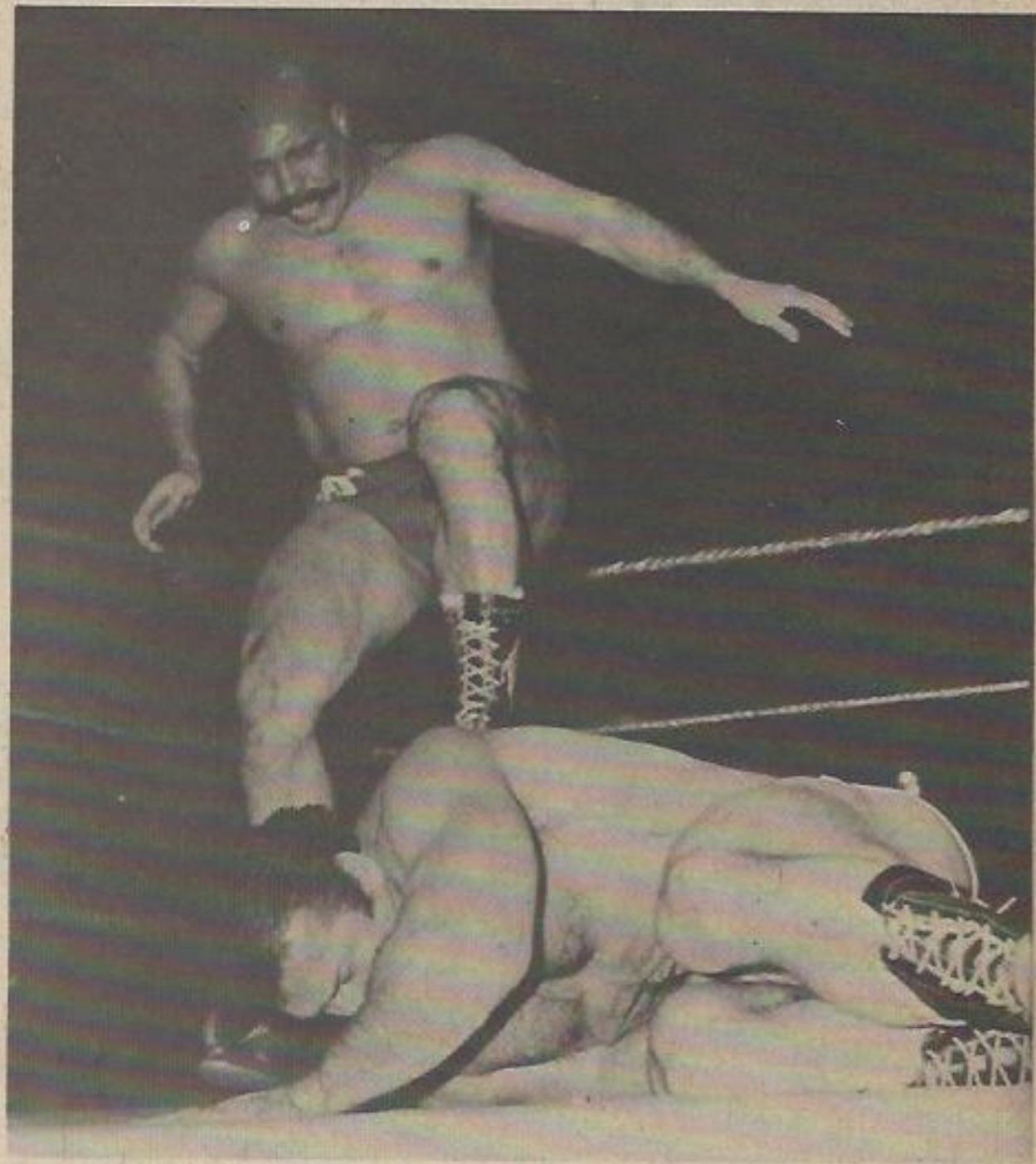
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A MENACE IS DRIVEN FROM THE WWF

(Continued from Page 35)



After taking an early beating, Ivan Putski came back to give Hussein a thrashing. Arab arrived in the Mid-Atlantic shortly thereafter. Just why he left the WWF is the point of contention.

That's when the trouble came down. The WWF officials, to avoid the lawsuit, asked Putski not to say anything. Now Ivan became enraged. Arab's threat was destroying his glory. Now a lawsuit would make Ivan keep quiet. He believed himself to be responsible for Arab's flight. He had a right to say no.

The more one looked into the situation, the more confusing it becomes. Here's what the Mid-Atlantic officials have to say: "We offered Hussein Arab a healthy contract before his match with Ivan Putski. We

purposely offered him more than the WWF. However, he gave us no definite date as to when he would arrive. He did not have to come to the Mid-Atlantic when he did. He chose to come after his match against Ivan Putski."

What the Mid-Atlantic officials are saying is that both men could be right. After all, why shouldn't Arab leave the WWF if he earns more money someplace else. Yet, why didn't he leave immediately? The WWF says Arab wasn't obligated to wrestle Putski. Hussein could have left before the Putski match. In fact, before the Putski match, WWF officials claim Arab promised to stay in the area for a year.

It gets even more confusing when films of the match are examined. There are three moments when Putski has Arab in agony. At each time, Arab does escape and continue to wrestle effectively. It's obvious Arab is having a horrible time of it. Still, there's nothing definite that one could say which made Arab have to leave. In fact, one wouldn't have been surprised if Putski left the area after the battle. It was an inhumanly tough match.

If Arab actually does sue Putski and the WWF, the courts will have to decide whether Arab fled in terror. That would solve everything. Chances are, though, the case will never come to court. The best legal minds say Arab would be a fool to go that far. Just the threat of suing has tainted Putski's glory. Even if Arab won his case, it wouldn't mean that much more. There is no way he'd get \$1 million or close to it. It would be hard for him to win enough to cover legal costs.

So, it now comes down to who you believe. Putski could be mistaken. Arab could be lying. There's no sure way to know.

Sadly, Ivan's greatest moment has turned against him. No one knows better than he that his glory is gone. No one can be sure if Ivan deserves the credit. Ivan insists he drove Arab out, but his voice has lost its joy. The delight of accomplishment has been taken from him.

As for Arab, he lives under the cloud of cowardice. There's no way he can prove that Ivan didn't drive him out of the WWF. His reputation may never be the same again. He even changed his name to "Iron Sheik."

There is only one thing for sure. Hussein "Iron Sheik" Arab is out of the WWF. Wrestlers in the federation can be grateful, no matter what the reason! □

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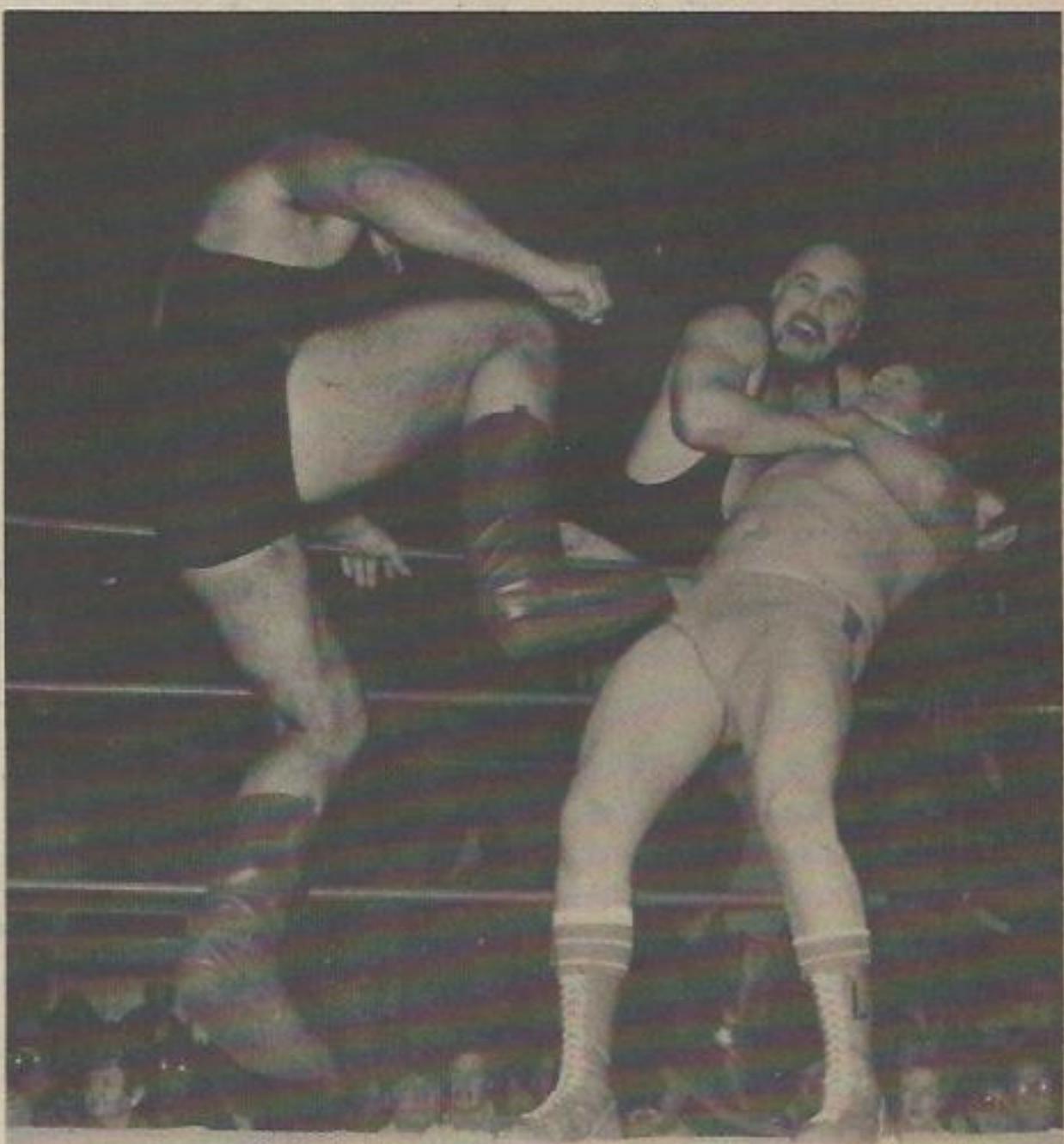
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KOLOFF & SMIRNOFF

(Continued from Page 37)



Alexis Smirnoff holds Lars Anderson by his throat in the corner while Ivan Koloff leaps high in the air to kick Lars' thigh. The Russian duo has put several opponents in the hospital—all in an evening's work.

cold and vicious.

"I can wrestle like that. I don't want to, but I will if I must. Too many guys think they can battle that way and they can't. Those guys wind up in a hospital and a different profession. It doesn't take great talent to cripple a guy. All it takes is the will to destroy. That's what makes Koloff and Smirnoff different from most wrestlers. They have the will."

"What's really scary is they don't do it to be mean. They really don't care about the other guy. They wouldn't blink if I dropped dead in a match. They just don't care."

Koloff knows what they're saying about the team and he loves it. Ivan is one of the few wrestlers whose success in a tag team is equal to his' success when wrestling

alone. There is something powerful about the Russian's personality. Usually, a good tag team partner is one who can adapt to many different styles. Somehow, Koloff makes his partners adapt to him. No one has ever adapted as well as Smirnoff.

"We can do it all," Ivan modestly states. "We're the greatest tag team ever. Do you know why? Because we understand each other. Both of us were born in Russia. We have a heritage of ruthless conquest. We are both descendants of men who rode with Ghengis Khan. Destroy everything in your path. The bloodlust courses through our veins."

"People say we have no mercy. They are right. Mercy is for losers. To win in this world means you

have no mercy. People say we torture our foes. That is wrong. We do what we must to win. We don't put names on our maneuvers.

"We are afraid of no one. Any team may challenge us and we'll accept. They can do what they want. We will not complain. All we ask is that they don't hide behind the referee.

"Someone once asked how I'd feel if an opponent ended my



Smirnoff (background) grins while Anderson grimaces from the force of Koloff's bearhug.

career. That does not even cross my mind. If I ended my career in a match I won, I'd be happy. If I ended my career in a match I lost, I'd be sad. Alexis is the only partner I've ever had who fully understands this.

"Our ancestors believed, 'Take no prisoners.' I believe that. Alexis believes that: Conquest is all-important."

A few days after his injury, the young wrestler was released from the hospital. He needed crutches to walk. When asked what he planned to do next, tears welled up in his eyes and a strangled sob was the only sound he could make.

At that moment, Koloff and Smirnoff were in the gym, preparing for their next opponents. Or victims. □

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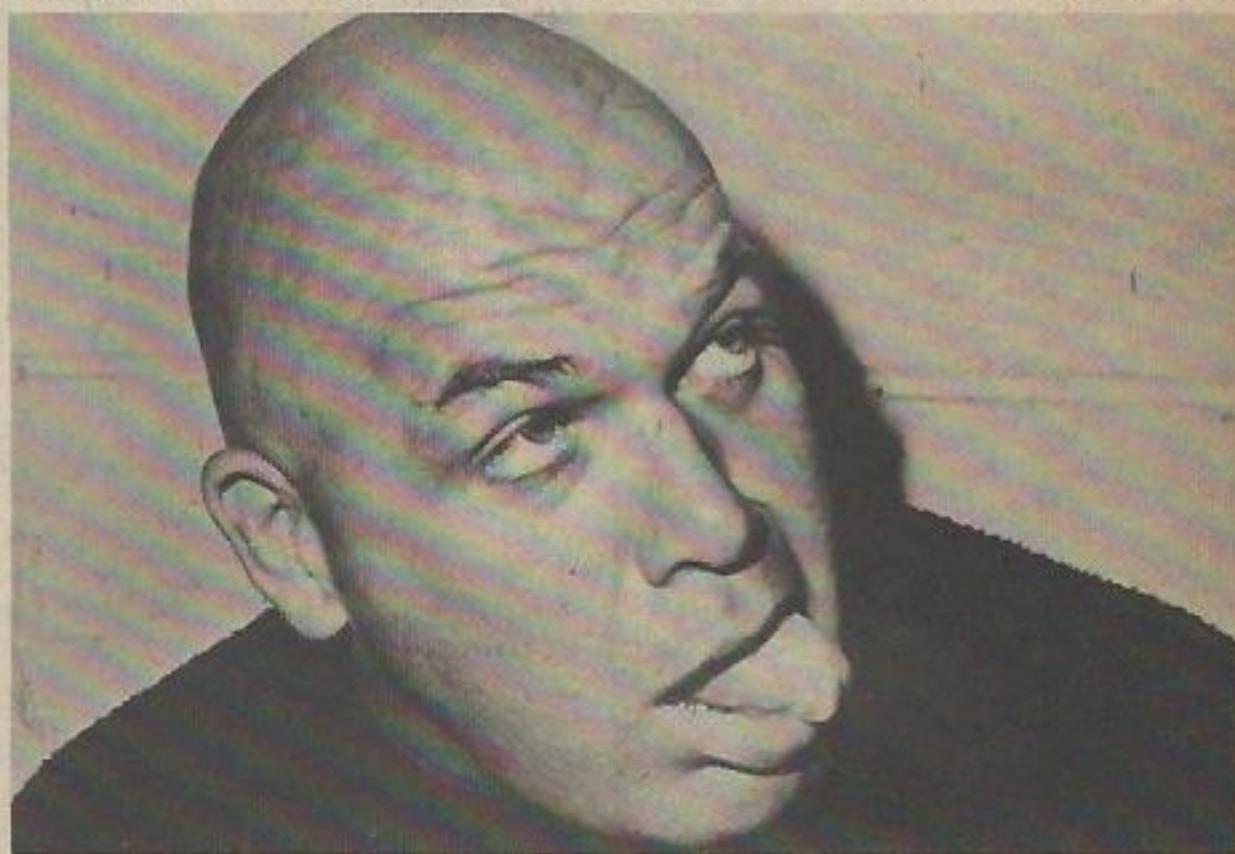
(Continued from Page 27)

when some turkey comes over and kicks garbage on my blanket. So I got up and kicked the crap out of the guy. I never saw him again."

RUMOR: George Steele has been inactive in professional wrestling because he has joined

the Hari Krishna movement! Steele hands out literature and plays the bongo drums on the buses of Detroit. He lives solely for the movement, and he survives on a strict diet of flower petals and sparkling water.

FACT: While Steele hasn't



While it is true that George Steele (above) is one of the few Americans that can listen to Ravi Shankar music for more than five minutes at a time, the rumor that he has joined the Hari Krishna movement is false. Lars Anderson (below) is back in action after suffering a leg injury at the hands of Alexis Smirnoff and Ivan Koloff.



appeared in the squared circle in recent months, there are absolutely no substantial facts to verify this rumor. Crazy stories are always circulating in Detroit about Steele's whereabouts. But we know he eats more than flower petals. He's been feasting on turnbuckle-stuffing for years! Love ya, George.

INJURY REPORT

LARS ANDERSON has recuperated from the leg injury he suffered during a tag team match against Georgia champions, ALEXIS SMIRNOFF and IVAN KOLOFF. The Russian duo punished Anderson for several minutes. Anderson was unable to crawl across the ring to tag his brother, Ole. □

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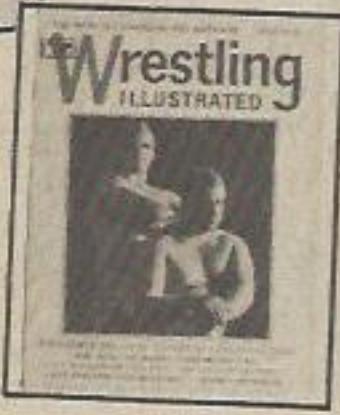


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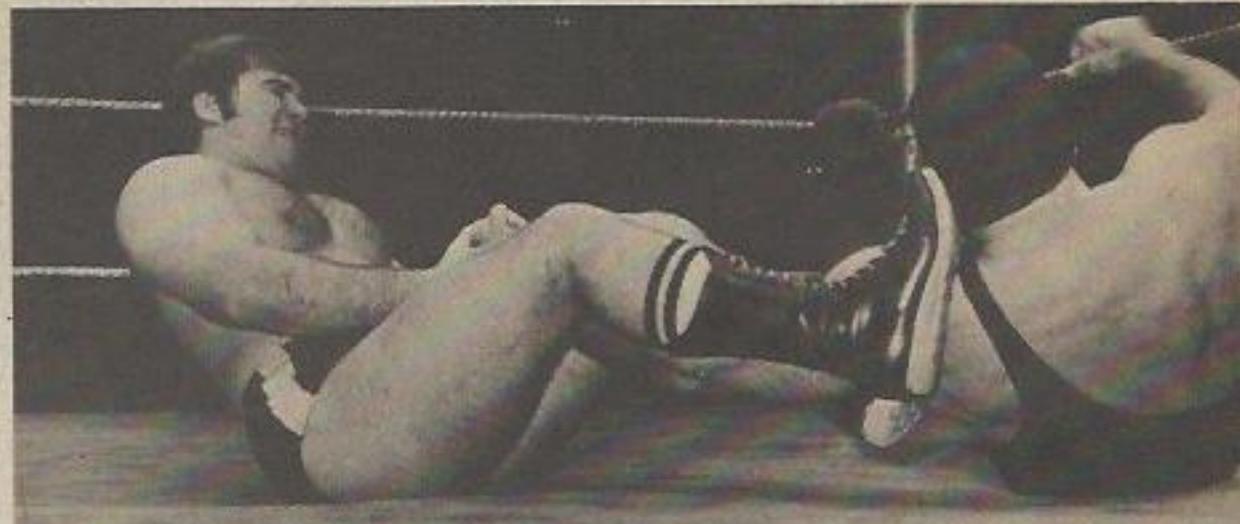
(Continued from Page 10)

as if he had to kill his best friend to save himself. Even then, Zbyszko wasn't aware of how shabbily Bruno had treated him. The young grappler was brainwashed by the hypocritical nonsense Bruno has been spewing for years.

Then it happened. Larry fell out of the ring. Bruno, a man who knows how to make an insult look like help, opened the ropes to make it easier for Zbyszko to get back in the ring.

For years he has kept Zbyszko down. Then he is forced into giving Larry a chance and then humiliates Zbyszko. It's the lowest kind of man who would do that.

Sammartino has revealed himself to be a petty man fearful for his image and popularity. When a man came along that could possibly overshadow Sammartino, Bruno did everything in his sly power to destroy that youngster. It



Zbyszko stretches the arm of Executioner #2 to the cheers of the crowd. Larry is no longer the crowd's favorite.

If you think about that gesture for a moment, it becomes the nastiest sort of insult. Zbyszko could have gotten back in the ring very easily by himself.

Would Bruno have done that for an opponent he respected? No, he'd do that for somebody not to be taken seriously, a less than honorable opponent. Sammartino was demeaning Zbyszko in front of the world.

So Zbyszko took a chair and beat Sammartino bloody. And predictably, the idiot fans are shocked at Zbyszko's actions. What does Sammartino have to do for the fans to get wise?

is to Sammartino's credit that could make the fans love him while he systematically tried to destroy Larry Zbyszko's career.

I welcome Larry Zbyszko to the ranks of those called rulebreaker. There is still time for him to realize his potential. It's a shame that his younger years were destroyed by a man whose reputation is as false as his reputation as a "living legend."

There is still time for Larry Zbyszko to be great. We can hope his greatness will drive Bruno Sammartino out of wrestling. □

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ONE ON ONE

(Continued from Page 47)

saying this as a friend. I think I understand your pain. I really do.

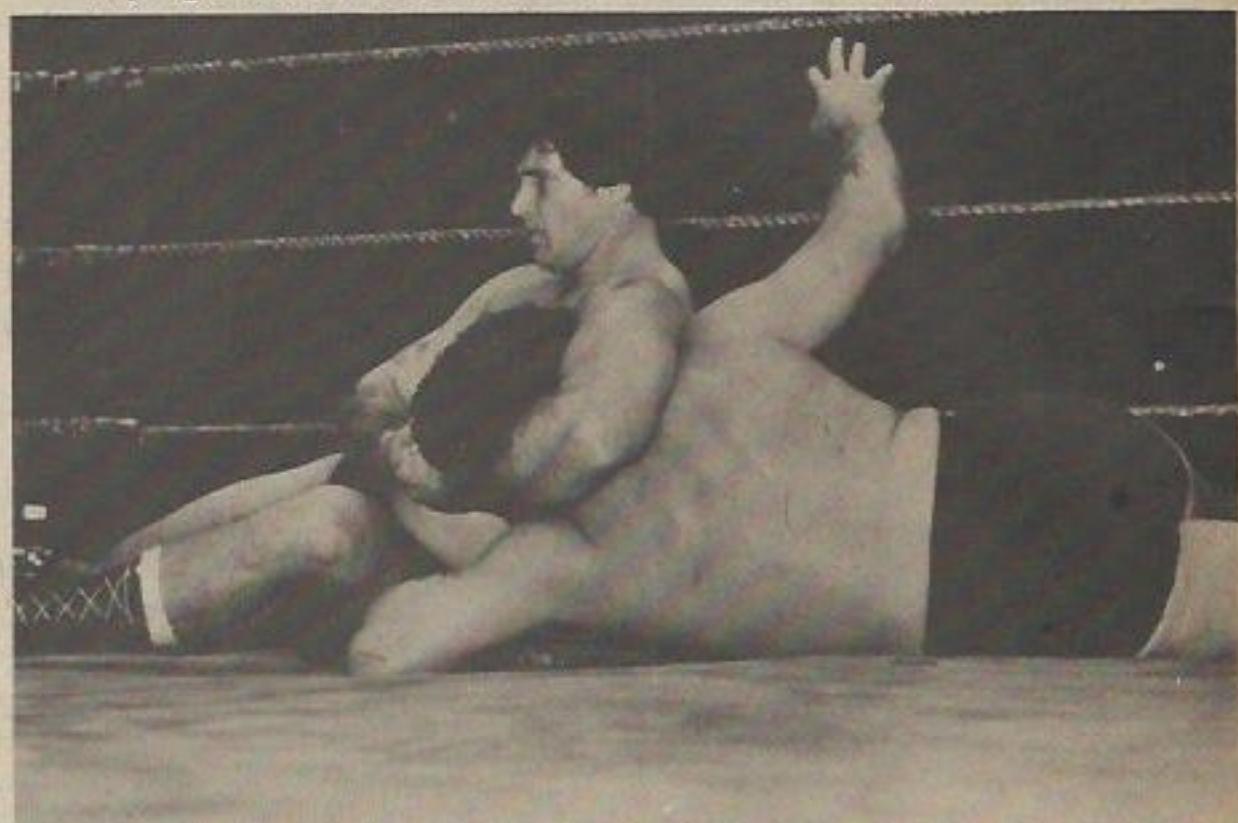
LZ: You know how it is.

TG: Yes, I truly do, I'm not just saying that. I understand the

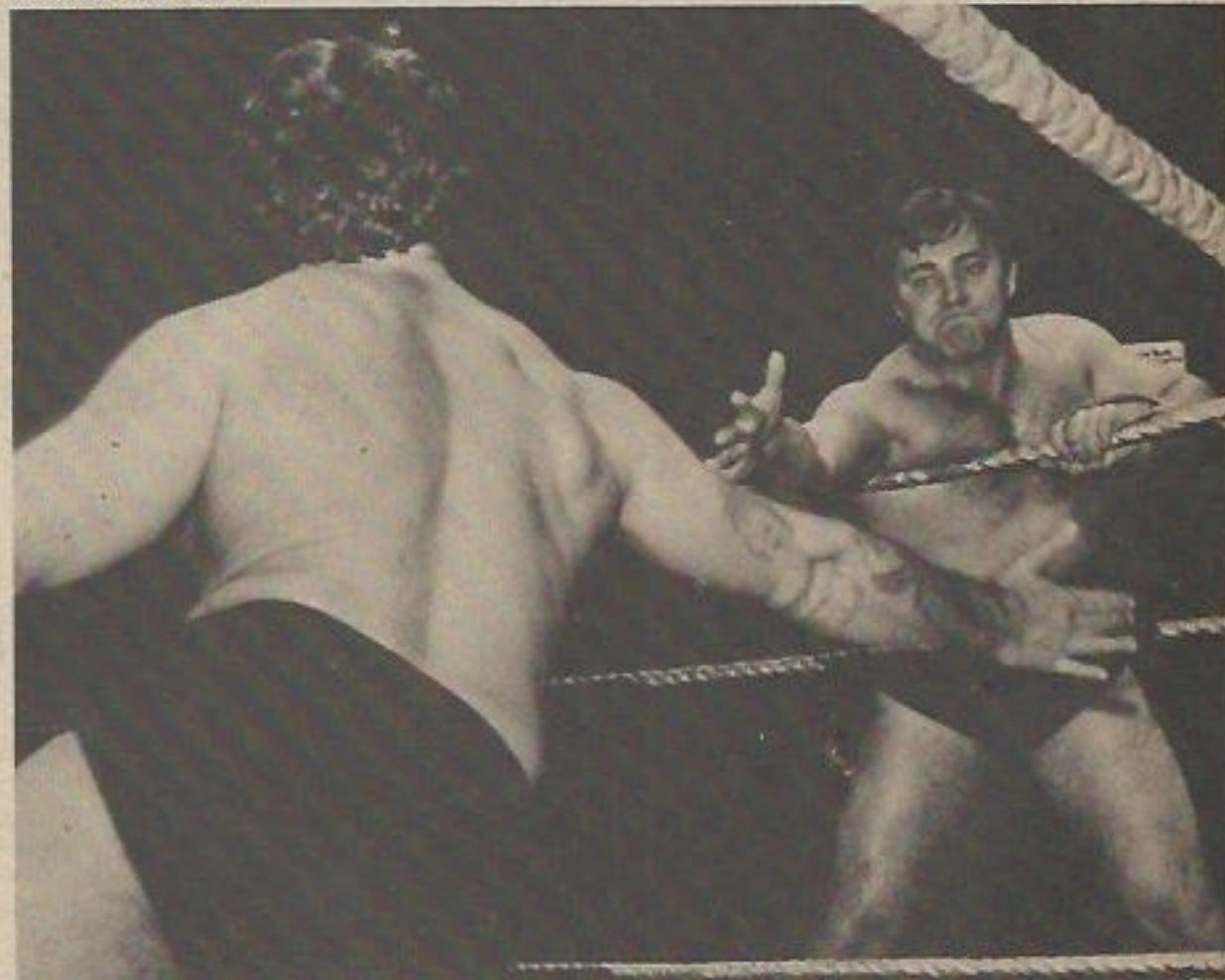
TG: Don't be sarcastic . . .

LZ: I'm not. I respect your opinion. Tell me what other path I could have taken.

TG: You could have wrestled, uh, scientifically.



Larry Zbyszko did not seem upset when he was passed up for a title shot with Harley Race. His partner, Tony Garea, was given the match when the NWA champion came to New York in January 1979 (above). Garea stretches to tag Larry during a WWF defense (below).



frustrations and know how they can build up. All I'm saying is your way might have been wrong.

LZ: What should I have done?

LZ: I did that.

TG: You could have, oh, maybe put more distance between you and Sammartino, maybe wrestled in a different area.



Zbyszko was thought to be content to share the WWF tag team title with Garea, but even then he suffered from a lack of identity.

LZ: And been billed as Bruno's protege, asked when I was going to team with Bruno, how's Bruno, is he coming to this area. You know that would have happened.

TG: Maybe you're right.

LZ: I know I'm right, damnit. I had to attack Sammartino. I have to get rid of him. He'll never accept me as an equal, I know that. I will not live in his shadow, I won't. I have too much to give to wrestling, too much to give to myself to accept that condition.

TG: People hate you, Larry.

LZ: If I hadn't done this, my friend, I would have hated myself. And that's the worst hate of all.

TG: Can you go on like this?

LZ: I must.

TG: Remember, if you need a sympathetic ear, give me a buzz.

LZ: I appreciate that, Tony.

TG: Good luck.

LZ: I'll surely need it. □

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